The electability of Latina pols

California JOURNAL

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THE LATINO CENTURY

Will Latinos be the dominant force of California politics?

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California JOURNAL
January 2000
Volume XXX1, Number 1

Upfront

Talking Points

Southern Exposure

By the Numbers

Washington Perspective

In our midst

Much has been written about the surge of Latinos in California. In this issue, author Gregory Rodriguez sees the day coming when "the terms Latino and California will be redundant." In some ways, it's already here. After all — evoking Gertrude Stein's infamous barb — we would have no "there there" without the unique sense of place we derive from our Hispanic-named cities, counties, towns, boulevards and houses of culture.

This blending of cultural identity is distinctly polychromatic, reaching beyond the limited monochrome of, say, Tex-Mex. In California, our lives are savorily seasoned by Latino cultures hailing from many shores.

Let's take, as an illustration, my very own household. On a bookcase hangs a funky, island-style mask discovered on a trip to Havana. (page 9.) On the hutch cabinet resides a collection of *molas* (page 16-17) hand-stitched by artisans in the San Blas Islands and purchased in Panama. Shelves hold displays of hand-painted carvings from El Salvador, red clay figurines from Colombia, miniature wooden carts from Puerto Rico. But artifacts from Mexico far outnumber the others. They are the sentimental favorites of the household because of memories of family adventures and weeks spent at Spanish-language schools south of the border. A hand-carved, gilded wooden Virgin of Guadalupe (page 25) was picked up in a warehouse gallery in Guanajuato, the colonial, central Mexican hometown of muralist Diego Rivera (page 36-37).

Cynthia H. Craft

The wildly colorful fabric on our cover drapes over another bookcase — a tapestry strap used to tie bundles onto the backs of donkeys in rural Mexico. It was purchased in Sacramento, at Tasha's, a shop across the street from our mid-town offices — proof that the best of Latino visual arts are already here, right in our midst.

The Latino Century

The California of the 21st century will have a decidedly deeper Latino flavor, but it will remain what it always has been – quintessentially California, a state that exemplifies the notion of America as a "permanently unfinished country."

By Gregory Rodriguez

Power in Numbers

Long derided as the "Sleeping Giant," Latinos are drawn to the polls in reaction to Proposition 187. Forged in adversity, the new Latino electorate could become the force that decides the future of the two-party system in California. Also, *CJ* editors list people to watch.

By Steve Scott

The electability of Latinas

Long overlooked by their community's kingmakers, Hispanic women are proving their political appeal by winning office in greater numbers. What's the secret to their political success?

By Claudia Buck

Latino commerce surges ahead

California plays host to more than double the national average of Latino-owned businesses, with estimates pegging the statewide total at 600,000.

By Emelyn Rodriguez

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umbrage

Midnight madness. Governor Gray Davis may have a well-deserved reputation for cautiousness, but not when it comes to calling special elections. Witness the whirlwind that followed the election of Congressman Joe Baca. When it became clear around 11 p.m. the evening of November 16 that Baca was going to win the special election to replace the late Representative George Brown, he resigned his state Senate seat. By midnight, Davis had issued a proclamation scheduling the special election. Why so fast? Well, it seems Davis needed to get the job done by midnight to ensure that Assemblywoman Nell Soto (D-Pomona), the Senate Democrats' first choice to replace her, could file for her Assembly seat at the same time she ran for Senate. A day later, and Davis would have had to schedule the elections such that it would have been forced to give up one or the other. Even with the machinations, Assembly Democrats were in a fix because of Soto's straddling, and spent much of November and early December trying to convince her to fish or cut bait. The problem: If she wins the Assembly nomination, her name stays on the November ballot even if she's already been elected to the Senate. Fortunately for Assembly Democrats, Soto felt good enough about her chances that she withdrew her Assembly papers, clearing the way for Democrats to at least run a clear open-seat race. Still, you've got to respect the way Davis sped things up for the team. Now if he could only move as fast on his appointments...

Passing the baton. The second Latino speaker in the history of the California Assembly will officially become a lame duck later this month. Antonio Villaraigosa, who succeeded the first Latino speaker (Cruz Bustamante), has set a speakership vote for January 24, and publicly endorsed his Sacramento roommate, Assembly Rules Committee Chair Bob Hertzberg, as his replacement. Republicans and Democrats alike were more than gracious in their pronouncements about Villaraigosa when he made his announcement. But you just can't get a full-blown compliment out of Governor Gray Davis, especially if you endorsed somebody else for governor in the 1998 primary. A look at the wording of his statement on Villaraigosa tells the story: "[Villaraigosa was] an effective ally ... in working with *me* ...." And a bit later, "... author of one of the most important of *my* education reforms...." Or how about "... an unselfish attitude that allowed *us* to have one of the most productive legislative session in history." Guess the Speaker was just playing Hangman in his office before Davis came along to give him something to do. Davis' self-serving "compliments" aside, Villaraigosa has, generally speaking, earned the kudos he got. Unlike Bustamante, who was frequently rolled by the more experienced Senate leadership, Villaraigosa kept the Assembly in the legislative game. And he distinguished himself from Bustamante in another area near and dear to his caucus: While Bustamante took his entire campaign stash with him when he left the speakership, Villaraigosa has already transferred $1 million to Hertzberg and will spend another $1.5 million to help elect legislative Democrats in the coming year.

"You campaign in poetry, you govern in prose."
— Mario Cuomo

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The California Wellness Foundation

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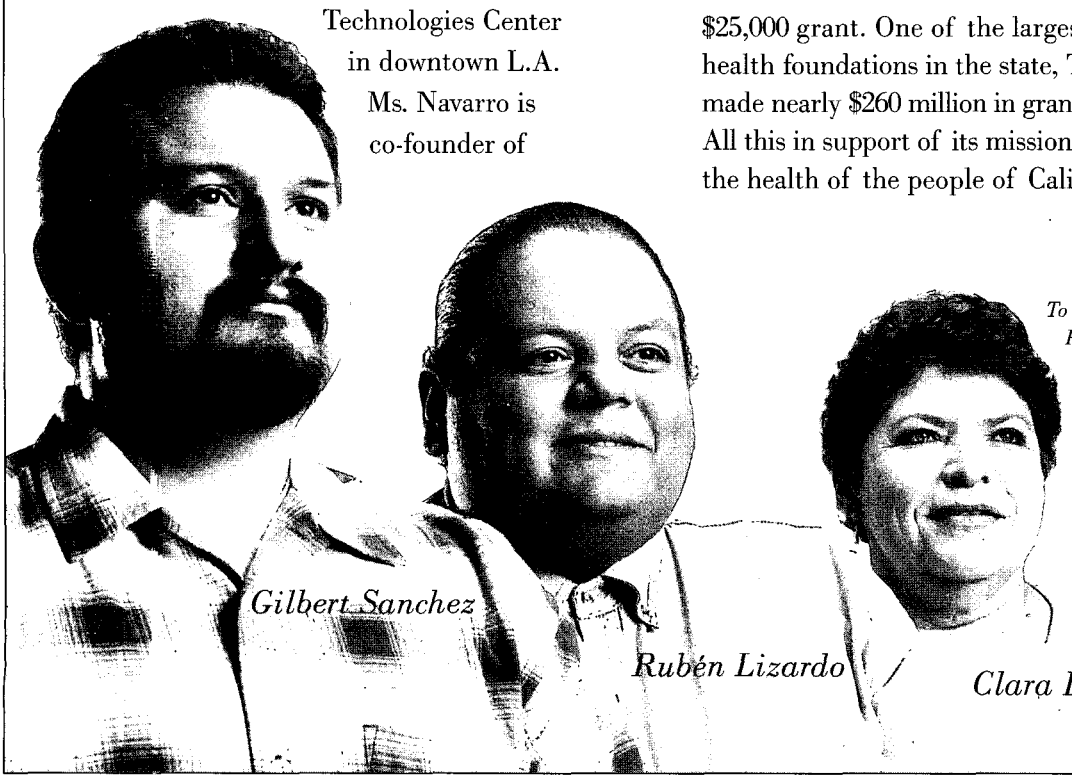
Gilbert Sanchez, Rubén Lizardo and Clara Luz Navarro are the winners of The California Wellness Foundation's 1999 Peace Prize. The annual prize is given to individuals who work to reduce violence in their communities.

Mr. Sanchez directs the Gang Violence Bridging Project at Cal State, L.A. Mr. Lizardo is education and training director of the Community Development Technologies Center in downtown L.A. Ms. Navarro is co-founder of *Mujeres Unidas y Activasd*, which provides training for domestic violence survivors in San Francisco.

As the No.1 killer of youth in California, violence is a major public health problem. The work of these activists demonstrates that education, emotional support and economic opportunity help to prevent violence and create healthier communities.

Each Peace Prize winner receives a $25,000 grant. One of the largest private health foundations in the state, TCWF has made nearly $260 million in grants since 1992. All this in support of its mission: To improve the health of the people of California.



Gilbert Sanchez *Rubén Lizardo* *Clara Luz Navarro*

To learn more about the Peace Prize and other TCWF grants for violence prevention, visit our web site. Or write us at 6320 Canoga Ave. #1700 Woodland Hills, CA 91367

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Quotable:

Bob Hertzberg, on going from west to east

"In the late '70s, I started in politics working in Latino causes, and it wasn't just at the top. When Hilda Solis ran for Rio Honda Community College Board of Trustees, I was there. When Marty Gallegos ran for Baldwin Park City Council. When four people sat down in a room to decide whether Antonio [Villaraigosa] was going to run or not, I was one of the four people. My wife was one of the others. In terms of the community, I've just been involved my whole life.

"When I got involved in politics, I was from the Westside, where politics was more raising money, going to big fund-raisers at the Beverly Hilton Hotel and sending out very expensive, chrome-coated mailers. I was a kid who was interested in politics, but I wanted the real McCoy. I wanted to touch and feel and go door-to-door. That's what motivated me in the process.

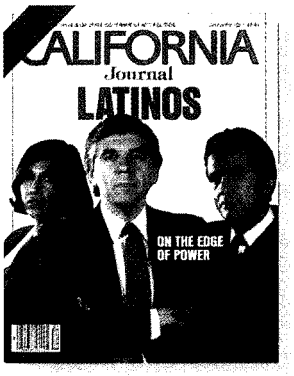
"I was chairman of a youth commission as a kid and a guy named Victor Griego, who just ran for city council in Los Angeles, was another commissioner who worked for Richard Alatorre, and basically, through a relationship with him that just blossomed, I ended up getting involved on the Eastside, principally because it was real politics. It was door-to-door, it was the stuff that was fun, and just because of relationships and friendships over the years one after the other after the other, it [involvement with Latino politics] kind of blossomed. It wasn't certainly intentional, but it turned out to be, certainly, wonderful from my perspective."

— Assemblyman Bob Hertzberg (D-Sherman Oaks), whom Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa has knighted as speaker-elect, on how his passion for local politics prompted him to step out of the tony Westside and leap into East L.A. campaigns.

Flashbacks:

Latino power redux

OK, so it's not the first time we've had this epiphany about emerging Latino political power in California. In our 30 years of publication, the topic has been for us a natural, ongoing story worthy of revisiting.



Still, when we do return to the subject, we also often return to our warehouse stacks to thumb through back issues of the *California Journal.* Such as the January 1987 magazine, whose cover proclaims: "Latinos: On the Edge of Power."

Inside, then-state Senator Art Torres is asked if he would like to be governor of California. "He unabashedly says 'at least,'" writes A.G. Block. But everyone agreed that to become California's first Latino elected governor, Torres would have to transcend an ethnic label. "He's no more the Latino candidate than George Deukmejian is the Armenian candidate," says political consultant David Townsend, touting a Torres candidacy.

As if that's not enough to tell you how times have changed, consider the words of John Seymour, at the time the GOP's No. 2 man in the state Senate. Of Torres, he said, "He has statewide ambitions, but the constituency he appeals to is too narrow."

Fast forward to 2000. Torres heads up the state Democratic Party. Seymour, having lost a 1992 bid to keep his U.S. Senate seat, has since dropped off the public radar screen.

— Cynthia H. Craft

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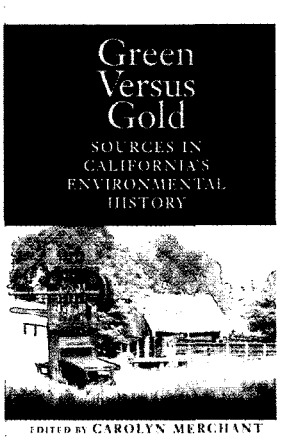
Excerpts:
From the Bookshelf

Green Versus Gold
Sources in California's Environmental History
Edited by Carolyn Merchant
Island Press, 1998

While gathering string for a historical timeline (see page 10), we ran across this illuminating anthology of writings by eyewitnesses to the unfolding of our state's environmental history. "Green Versus Gold" chronicles more than a century and a half of conflicts – the push and pull – between humans and nature. From these pages emerge voices as varied as settlers, gold seekers, novelists, scientists *campesinos,* even present-day commentators.



Their stories reach back to Native American cultures and forward to today's clashes between the forces of progress and community activists. One such entry is titled "Magdelena Avila Tells How Hispanic Farmworkers Stopped an Incinerator, 1992" and recounts how *El Pueblo para el Aire y Agua Limpio* – or, People for Clean Air and Water — a grassroots coalition in the Central Valley town of Kettleman City, persuaded Chemical Waste Management to look elsewhere for a location for a toxic waste incinerator.

Avila says the corporation "initially assessed [the community] as one of low resistance, one without political power. They felt they were dealing with a 'sleepy lagoon.': 'No problem, we're going to pass right through.' But this Goliath company, playing the role of corporate monster, completely miscalculated the community's resources and capacity. Kettleman City includes many individuals with tremendous experience in leadership roles, in grassroots organizing, much of it stemming from the farmworkers struggles." In battling the company – successfully, it turned out – the town drew upon all these "years of experience and skills," Avila recalls.

This is but one David-and-Goliath story folded into Merchant's skillfully edited, inclusive anthology. Spend a few hours with this book and you'll get a clearer picture of the panoramic timeline of where we've been and where we're headed.

– *Cynthia H. Craft*

Money:
When all else fails. . .

Let's face it: In everything we do, there's a bottom line — even in arguing for raising the educational attainment of Latinos in the workforce.

To wit, the California Research Bureau finds a "sizable economic benefit" could be in store if only state policymakers would invest more in educating Latinos, who studies have found generally lag behind other groups in years of schooling completed and, therefore, in economic parity.

The best-case scenario, researchers said, would bring the education of working Latinos on par with California's non-Latinos. Based on 4.4 million Latinos in the workforce in 1998, the gains produced would equal the princely sum of $28 billion in increased wages annually, and $1.7 billion in increased state income tax revenue.

The number-crunchers, acting on the request of state Senator Richard Polanco (D-Los Angeles), penciled out a more modest scenario as well. In this one, a bump-up in education for 5 percent of the Latino labor force would result in those individuals earning $1.4 billion more annually, with $79 million more going into state income tax coffers. And that's for improving the educational outlook of just 5 percent of the 217,438 Latino workers in the labor force in 1998. (See **www.library.ca.gov** for the full report.)

Dollars and cents. If nothing else does the trick, at least this ought to resonate with — and motivate — California's politicians to step up their action plans.

— *Cynthia H. Craft*

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The Latino

The Latino Century. The words evoke a metamorphosis, a profound change, yet one that does not come readily to mind. They do not mean that California will become wholly Latino. Instead, they hold forth the promise that California has moved beyond its often-racist past.

The last quarter of the 20th century — particularly the 1990s — witnessed a furor over immigration reminiscent of the mid-19th and early 20th centuries. As the source of immigrants changed from mostly European to predominately Latin American and Asian, California replaced New York

The California of the 21st century will have a decidedly Latin flavor, but it will remain what it always has been — quintessentially California, a state that exemplifies the notion of America as a "permanently unfinished country."

By
Gregory Rodriguez

as America's premier gateway. Home to nearly one-third of America's immigrants by 1990, California was thrust to the center of a national debate over immigration. Mexican newcomers became the scapegoats of those who would restrict contemporary immigration. The idea that descendants of Latin American immigrants would soon make up a majority of Californians continues to cause alarm in some quarters. But if American history is any guide, the alarm will prove to be misplaced. By the close of the new century, we may even have shed our obsession with race.

The overwhelming majority of California's Latinos derive from the 20th century's two great waves of Latin American immigration — the first during the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1919 and the second during the mid-1970s, reaching a crescendo in the '80s. In the 1980s, hundreds of thousands of Central and South American immigrants, seeking refuge from political turmoil and economic hardship, diversified the state's heavily Mexican-origin Latino population.

These facts run counter to the traditional view of Latino immigration posed by ethnic advocates and activist historians who, since the 1960s, have chosen to characterize the Mexican-Americans of California and the American Southwest as a conquered people. They assumed this depiction was beneficial to Latinos on two fronts. On one level, it would stress their ancestral rights to a region where Spanish-speaking people lived well before the mass arrival of Anglo-American settlers. On the other, it would confer upon them the additional "protected status" of a colonized ethnic minority. The United Farm Workers Union long has employed the rallying cry, "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us." By fantasizing that the Southwest was the original homeland of the Aztecs, followers of the now-

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moribund Chicano Movement of a generation ago took their claim of regional ownership even one step further.

California and the Southwest became part of the United States by way of a massive land grab in the mid-19th century. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which concluded the Mexican-American War, set the Rio Grande as the new U.S.-Mexico boundary. The size of the territory that Mexico ceded to the U.S. represented fully one-half of the land Mexico held at the time of its independence from Spain in 1821. Yet, in all the territory comprising the present states of California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona and parts of Wyoming and Colorado lived relatively few Spanish-speaking people. In 1848, approximately 75,000 Spanish speakers resided in the territory, most of them in New Mexico. Only 7,500 people of Spanish or Mexican heritage were living in California when the treaty was signed. The Gold Rush, which brought waves of Anglo and other fortune seekers to the Golden State, subsequently rendered the state's original Latinos a small minority by 1899.

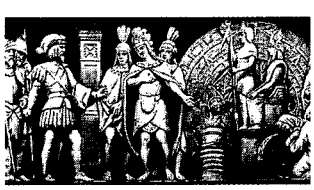
The intellectual and political emphasis on the U.S. conquest of the Southwest has obscured our collective understanding of Latinos as an immigrant group. As of 1990, fully 88 percent of adult California Latinos were either immigrants or children of immigrants. Four in five Latino immigrants in the state arrived in the U.S. after 1970. As such, California's Latinos are a relatively new population. Unlike a conquered people, whose culture has been subdued by an unwelcome, outside force, today's Latin American immigrants are willingly uprooting themselves from their countries of birth.

Latinos will change America even as America changes them.

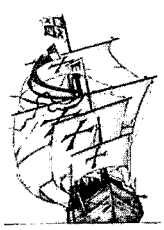
Like previous waves of immigrants, today's Latinos will change America even as America changes them. Demographers project that Latinos — already more than 50 percent of Los Angeles County — will make up 40 percent of all California residents within 21 years and assume majority status sometime around mid-century. But what "Latino" will mean by the year 2075, no one really knows. Contemporary journalism is fond of dividing the American people into self-contained ethnic "communities." Reporters search out the opinion of the Asian or Latino communities — yet never of the "white community." The triumph of multi-culturalism — the ideology that promotes the co-existence of many separate but equal cultures in one locality — has propagated the notion that ethnic American subcultures are static and should be preserved as distinct cultures within a larger federation of American nationalities.

This ideal of multi-culturalism, though, is not a new one. At the end of the first great wave of immigration of the 20th century, Horace Kallen argued that the ideal of a unitary American nationality had been subsumed by millions of new immigrants. He advocated that the U.S. create a "democracy of nationalities" in which ethnics

Hispanics in California

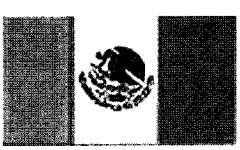


1520
Explorer Hernan Cortes stakes claim to "New Spain" on land that is now Mexico, with an eye toward expanding northward.



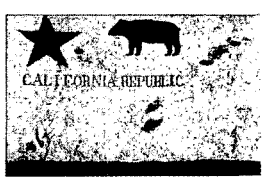
1542
Spaniard Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sails along the California coast, establishing Spain's claim.

1765
Spain's Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra set off for California to establish missions and presidios.



1821
Mexico gains independence from Spain, winning control of California.

1846
An uprising of settlers stage the "Bear Flag Revolt" against the Mexican government. The U.S. declares war on Mexico.



1848
The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidal cedes California to the United Sta

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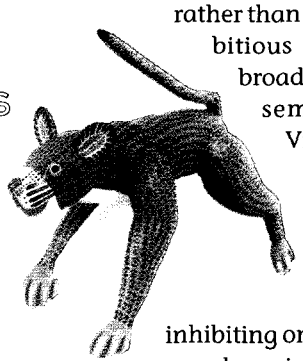
could realize their goals "according to their kind."

But 85 years later, it is clear that the U.S. has not broken up into a federation of ethnic fiefdoms and that U.S. cultural unity is not at odds with a multitude of American ethnic identities. Multi-culturalism, the contemporary heir to Kallen's brand of cultural pluralism, is also destined to become a well-intentioned idea that never came to pass. Indeed, in California and other states with non-white majorities, multi-culturalism will likely collapse under its own weight.

Multi-culturalism will likely collapse under its own weight.

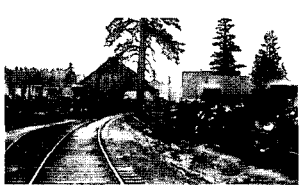


Ironically, multi-culturalism, which can be characterized as a type of cultural time-sharing scheme, advocates provincialism in an increasingly cosmopolitan society. Its fundamental flaw is its steady focus on the diversity of group identities and not on the everyday convergence of people and cultures that is creating the new California. While ethnic identification will not disappear, over time it will cease to play as central a role in social organization. The Irish were considered a distinct "race" when they became the majority of Bostonians in the 1880s. Over time, however, they ceased to be seen as a group apart from the mainstream. Indeed, according to former Boston City Council President Bruce Bolling, a prominent black politician, everyone in the city is "a little Irish by osmosis." Paradoxically, just as Latino-American culture will increasingly influence non-Hispanics, Latinos themselves will refuse to be confined within the boundaries of multi-culturalism.

In their initial stages of social integration, Latinos, like many ethnic groups before them, will continue to leverage their ethnicity to gain access to the mainstream. Politicians will count heavily on the support of co-ethnics to catapult them into seats of power. But after another generation of Latinos in leadership positions, Mexican-American politicians will prefer to be seen as Californian rather than Latino leaders. Already, ambitious Latino politicians seeking broader appeal, most notably Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa (D-Los Angeles), bridle at being pigeonholed as "Latino leaders." Similarly, to be confined within one's ethnic category will ultimately be considered as inhibiting one's career ambitions. As they approach majority status, Latinos in many walks of life will not be content with such a circumscribed life space and the limited opportunities it affords.

Irish-Americans, who perfected ethnic politics at the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, initially employed ethnocentric "shamrock politics" to get elected. But as they gained in power and confidence, Irish politicians sought recognition as mainstream American candidates. When Irish-American Al Smith became speaker of New York's Legislature, then governor in the 1910s, both he and Irish-controlled Tammany Hall, the powerful Manhattan Democratic Party organization, agreed that he had to become much more than just a Tammany politician. While never forgetting his ethnic base, Smith broadened

1849
The Gold Rush brings mass migration to California. Violence and prejudice is aimed at Hispanics, Chinese, native Americans and others.



Railroads reach the west. Hispanic populations across the state decrease.

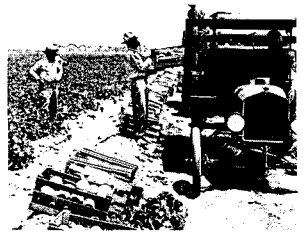
1890

1910
Immigration from Mexico increases, with newcomers outnumbering the Spanish-speaking descendants of the original Californios.

Mexican-Americans and Mexican nationals replace Japanese as the main source of farm labor.

1915

1942
Agribusiness, hit with wartime labor shortages, recruits more Mexican laborers for "factories in the fields."



The "Zoot Suit" riots in Los Angeles call attention to poor housing and jobs for urban Mexican Americans.

1943

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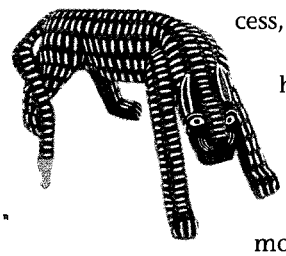
his outlook and became more politically independent, seeking allies in all corners of the state. Even though he would face virulent anti-catholicism in other parts of the country while running for president in 1928, Smith's overtures helped bridge the distinction between Irish and non-Irish in his own home state.

In contemporary California, the most successful Latino politicians are doing for Latinos in California what Smith's political ascendance did for Irish-Americans in New York. By deftly balancing their ethnic and national loyalties, they are paving the way for the day when the terms Latino and California will be redundant.

The day will come when the terms Latino and California will be redundant.

Over the past few decades, assimilation has become America's dirty little secret. However obscured by the slogans of multi-culturalism, assimilation remains a potent force in American life. At the dawn of the third millennium, the United States is perhaps the most culturally influential nation in history. Its language has long since become the *lingua franca* of business and diplomacy, and its popular culture permeates even remote points on earth. It is naive to think that immigrants living within its borders remain somehow immune to its assimilative power. News of an impending Latino majority in California has been greeted with both alarm and celebration, but there is no reason to believe that the state's ethnic transformation will alter its core values.

Today, as in the past, some immigration alarmists see the seeds of secessionist movements within immigrant enclaves. They argue that the desire of immigrants to live together in ethnic neighborhoods and to retain the language, symbols and tastes of their native countries are signs of active resistance to, or resentment of, mainstream U.S. culture. But assimilation — residential, cultural and economic — is not now, nor has it ever been, an instant transformation in which an immigrant suddenly becomes a "full-fledged American." Instead, it is a long-term, sometimes multi-generational process, which may never end.

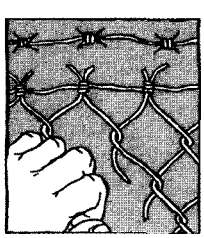


Sociologist Nathan Glazer has called the U.S. "the permanently unfinished country," and no state of the union exemplifies this protean American dynamism more than California. The most diverse state in the nation, California will not be the first state to have a majority group that belongs to an identifiable national minority. Seventy percent of Utahns are Mormon, and Hawaii has been majority Asian since it became a part of the United States. While both culturally unique, neither state is considered to be utterly foreign from the national culture. Indeed, more than anything else, immigration patterns have made America a pluralistic nation by default.

While few would dispute that the seeds of Germany, Ireland, Japan and the Russian Pale have gradually been absorbed into the American mainstream, large immigrant groups have always influenced the regions of the country where they clustered. Foods and customs that were once considered foreign became part and parcel of regional

1951

Congress formalizes the *bracero* program with passage of Public Law 78. Within one year, 190,000 Mexican contract workers enter California. Illegal immigration increases, too.

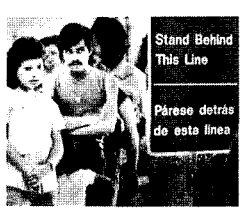


1954

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service launches "Operation Wetback" to curb unauthorized border crossings.

1965

Cesar Chavez leads farm workers in a strike against Delano-area grape producers to protest poor working conditions for field laborers.



1965

Mexican immigration increases under the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965, which allows dependents to join farm workers already in the U.S.

1960s-1970s

1960s-1970s: A growing Chicano movement heightens awareness of social, economic, artistic and political development in the barrio of East Los Angeles, with the largest concentration of Mexican-Americans in the U.S.

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culture. The bratwurst served at County Stadium in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as well as the presence of a large beer industry in that city, reflects Milwaukee's long history of German immigration. To this day, things Irish attain greater popularity in Boston than anywhere else in America. The Irish rock band U2 credits Boston for its initial popular success in America. "Angela's Ashes," Frank McCourt's Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir about growing up poor in New York and Ireland, stayed atop the Boston bestseller list longer than anywhere else. In San Antonio, Texas, which has long had a Mexican-American majority, no one doubts that the world-champion San Antonio Spurs are an American basketball team. With its well-established Mexican-American population, San Antonio, the quintessential Latino-American city, does not even have a daily Spanish-language newspaper.

Latinos will ... not be immune to the influence of other ethnic groups.

Today's Latin American and Asian immigrants will continue to give California's cities new cultural, linguistic and even phenotypic traits. Yet, these cities are also likely to remain quintessentially American. Heavy Scandinavian immigration has made the typical Minnesotan look and speak differently than the typical Pennsylvanian (whose roots are German). Similarly, the appearance and speech patterns of the average Californian of the next century will draw heavily from south of the border. Indeed, these influences are already noticeable. A decade ago, David Letterman joked that he decided not to move back to Los Angeles because after 10 years away, he finally had lost his Mexican-American accent. He stayed in New York, where, incidentally, the impact of Jewish immigration is manifest throughout — particularly in the cadence of its language and the extensive use of Yiddishisms by both Jews and non-Jews.

In their groundbreaking book, "Beyond the Melting Pot," Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan stressed that American ethnic subcultures are not mere transplants of the ways and customs of the homeland. Rather, they are a new social form forged by the melding of immigrants into their new American environment. Though Latinos will become a larger portion of the state, they will not be immune to the influence of other ethnic groups. Whereas Mexicans in places like Texas come into contact with a relatively homogenous Anglo population, California Latinos will rub shoulders with significant Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Jewish, and Armenian neighbors, to name a few. A third-generation Salvadoran-American raised in the heavily-Jewish Westside of Los Angeles will have significantly different cultural references than his cousin raised in heavily Chinese-American San Francisco.

In the future, Latinos are likely to continue to intermarry with other ethnic groups at healthy rates. Intermarriage will be particularly common among the more educated and well-to-do Latino Californians. At the last available census in 1990, fully one-third of middle-class Latinos born in the U.S. were married to non-Latinos. The chances of intermarriage also increase with each additional gen-

1980s

Latino political consciousness rises with growing impact of such groups as the MALDEF, the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project and the United Neighborhood Organization in East L.A.

1986

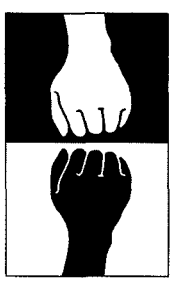
The U.S. Immigration Reform and Control Act gives citizenship opportunities to immigrants residing in the U.S. illegally. About 1.5 million Mexican-Americans seek amnesty.

1994

Gov. Pete Wilson backs the "Save Our State" initiative, or Proposition 187. It denies U.S. citizenship, health care, and schooling to children born in the U.S. to illegal immigrants. It passes.

1996

Wilson again stirs up prejudices with Proposition 209, an initiative banning affirmative action programs. It passes.

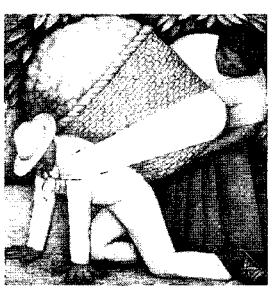


1998

Proposition 227 outlaws bilingual teaching in the schools.

1999

The most recent statewide election sends 24 Latinos to the California Legislature and five to Congress.



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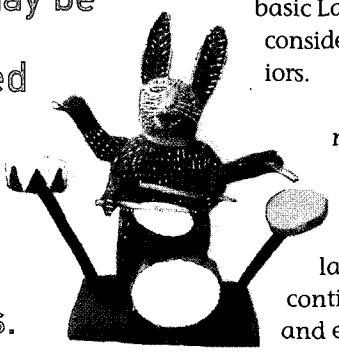
eration. Poor Latino Californians will probably have much lower rates of intermarriage. Though we can expect Latinos to be represented at all strata of society by the late 21st century, the working class will be more singularly Latino and less culturally mixed. With Latino Californians distributed throughout the economic landscape, future debates over access and equality will cut on class and not racial lines.

UCLA professor David Hayes-Bautista was among the first scholars to look at the Latinization of California. He has concluded that the presence of a critical mass of Latinos in the state and the proximity to the border help to ensure that Latinos will benefit from a distinct cultural ecology than have previous immigrant groups. In other words, even as Latinos become part and parcel of the mainstream, their numbers help them preserve remnants of Old World behaviors, particularly those regarding work, family life and faith.

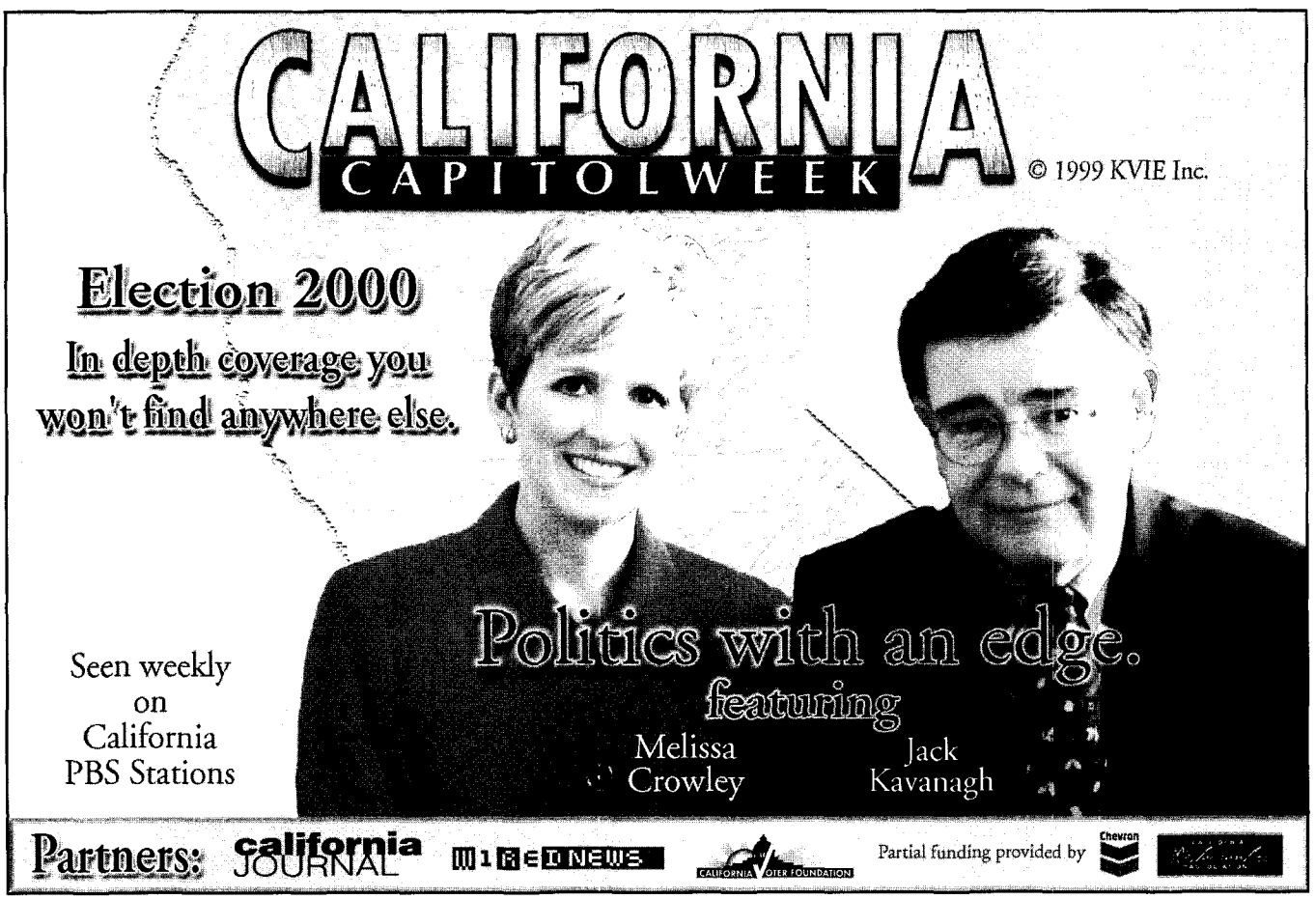
A glance at contemporary statistics show that Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles County demonstrate a stronger work ethic, higher propensity to form traditional families, and lower divorce rates than the average Southern Californian. While not disputing that immigrant cultures change over time, Hayes-Bautista argues that certain core behaviors will persist and become the societal norm. Just as the frugal, non-ostentatious ways of Scandinavian immigrants are now considered to be average Minnesotan behavior, many basic Latino tendencies will one day be considered average California behaviors.

Many basic Latino tendencies will one day be considered average California behaviors.



American culture at large will no doubt undergo major upheavals in the Information Age. Whatever it means to be Latino — and Californian — in the late 21st century is very much contingent on the social, cultural, and economic trends of the coming decades. There are precedents and signposts throughout the American past, but California is not known for its predictability. With any luck, after the initial and difficult stages of integrating millions of newcomers is finally complete, Californians will become far less interested in where they are from and more concerned with who they are becoming.

Gregory Rodriguez, of Los Angeles, is a fellow at the New America Foundation, a Washington, D.C. based non-profit public policy institute.



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Health

Sexually healthy teens are less likely to become parents. But what does it mean for teens to be sexually healthy? It means that they have the knowledge and skills they need to make responsible decisions about their sexual behavior. It means that they understand sexual development and feelings. It means they have the skills and self-esteem to set personal boundaries. And it means they're motivated to think about the future consequences of the decisions they make today.

What can you do?

Consider the "whole teen" when making program and policy decisions that affect teen health.

Support community and school programs that promote healthy adolescent sexuality and teen pregnancy prevention.

Help the teens in your family develop healthy values and attitudes about their own sexuality and learn how to prevent unplanned pregnancies.

Teen pregnancy is also an adult problem. Let's solve it together.

To learn more, visit our website at: www.letsgetreal.org

The "Get Real About Teen Pregnancy" public education campaign is funded by a grant to Deen+Black from The California Wellness Foundation.

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Competing for the ne

Long derided as the "Sleeping Giant," Latinos were drawn to the polls in reaction to Proposition 187. Forged in adversity, the new Latino electorate could become the force that decides the future of the two-party system in California.

by Steve Scott

This past summer, the state Assembly was witness to an unusual testimonial honoring one of its most celebrated former speakers, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown. Former colleagues and political adversaries from decades past turned up to wax nostalgic about the self-proclaimed "Ayatollah of the Assembly," and the golden days before term limits. The ceremony ended with the dedication of a permanent "Willie Brown" desk on the Assembly floor and the renaming of the speaker's conference room in his honor.

What made the ceremony unusual was not the fact that Brown was being honored — the tribute was, in fact, long overdue. Rather, it was how out of place the former speaker seemed alongside his successor. Though still the mayor of a major city, Brown seemed strangely archaic — an aging veteran accepting his Lifetime Achievement Award.

The face of California's here and now, as well as its future, was instead that of the man standing next to Brown, current Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa. It was a youthful, confident face. A Southern California face. A Latino face.

"I don't want to sound too romantic about this, but it's the brave new world," said Leo Briones, a Los Angeles-based Democratic political consultant. "It's here."

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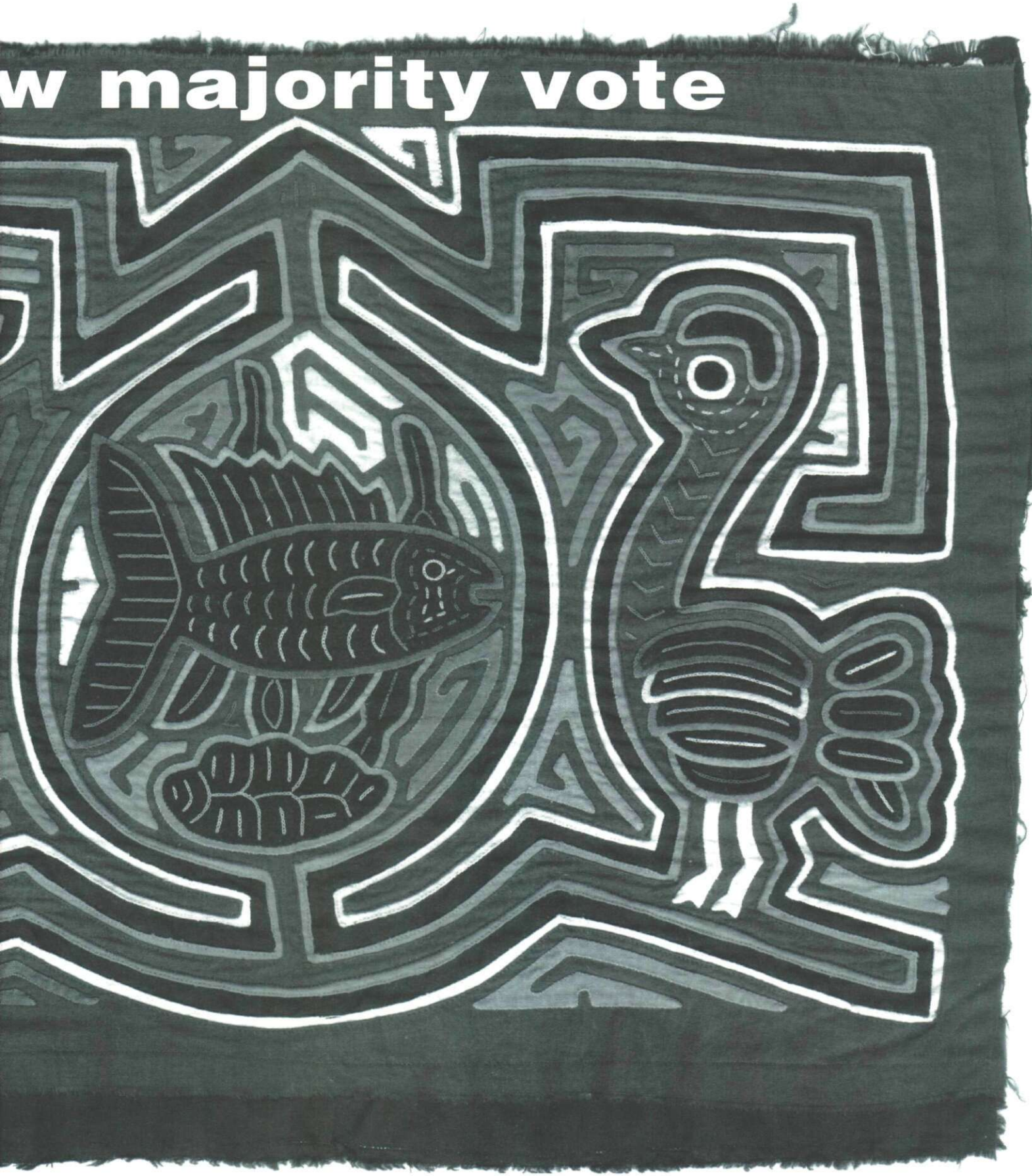

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Romanticizing isn't needed to appreciate how far Latino political power has come in the 1990s. More than one out of every seven voters statewide is Latino — still well below the Latino share of the overall population, but almost half again as high as it was at the beginning of the decade.

In 1990 there were only seven Latinos in the state Legislature and none in statewide office. But as 1999 closes, there are six in the Senate alone, 23 total in the Legislature. The state Assembly has seen its first and second Latino speakers, and a Latino — Cruz Bustamante — was elected lieutenant governor for the first time this century. And there's no longer much doubt that the voting behavior of the burgeoning Hispanic electorate will dictate the future of the two major political parties in California, especially the Republican Party.

"Latinos have become the new soccer moms," said Harry Pachon, director of the Claremont-based Tomás Rivera Policy Institute.

Adios 'Sleeping Giant'

As recently as the middle 1990s, Latino electoral power existed more in theory than in fact. Even as the Latino portion of California's population approached one-third, the Latino share of the electorate hovered around 9-10 percent. Latino representatives in Sacramento and Washington almost exclusively came from urban Los Angeles County districts. A discussion of Latino politics usually wound up being a discussion of Los Angeles politics, or of the activist heritage spawned by Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. Despite the civic education and activism of groups such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), Latinos in California were unable to shake the Madison Avenue catchphrase that had been applied to their dormant political muscle: "The Sleeping Giant."

"I heard it all the time in my early political involvement," state Senator Richard Polanco (D-Los Angeles) said of the "Sleeping Giant" expression. "'Don't worry, they're not going to vote. They don't have the numbers.' I don't think it was ever asleep. Many were getting educated and just earning a living."

Sleeping or not, an array of events converged in the mid-1990s to ignite a flame of civic engagement among California Latinos. The kindling for that engagement was laid in 1986, when the federal Immigration Reform and Control Act was implemented. By the mid-1990s, as many as five million former illegal immigrants granted amnesty by the law were positioned to become U.S. citizens. Egged on by Latino lawmakers, the state Legislature allocated money to provide naturalization services — language and citizenship instruction — to the prospective citizens.

Then came Proposition 187.

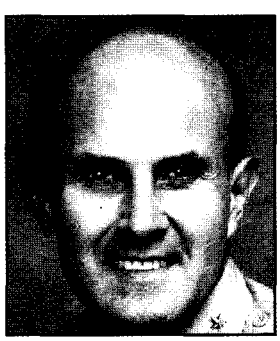
The Wilson factor

The brainchild of Reagan-era Immigration and Naturalization Service chief Alan Nelson, Proposition 187 sought to cut off illegal immigrants from all but emergency health-

People to Watch

As Latino political power grows in coming years, look for these individuals to make a mark in this new millennium.

Lee Baca
Los Angeles County Sheriff



When Baca was elected in 1998, he was no stranger to the world's largest sheriff's department. Having grown up in East Los Angeles, Baca became a trainee in 1965 and spent the next 30 years working his way upward through the ranks. In a metropolitan area marred by fractured race relations, Baca steps in as the first Latino sheriff to bridge the divide.

Cruz Bustamante, Lieutenant Governor, Co-Chair, Commission on Building for the 21st Century

You name it in Latino political achievement and he got there first. Bustamante, a Democrat, has the distinction of becoming the first Latino Assembly Speaker, first Latino to hold statewide office in modern times and first Latino lieutenant governor. Not afraid to go head-to-head with Governor Gray Davis, Bustamante has a chance to score big with the statewide electorate if he helps pave the way toward infrastructure improvements as co-

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care services, and remove their U.S.-born children from public schools. With the state in the midst of its worst recession since the 1930s, the initiative appealed to a society looking for a scapegoat for its economic malaise. Groping for an issue to bolster his faltering re-election effort, then-Governor Pete Wilson embraced Proposition 187, featuring it in his television advertising against primary foe Ron Unz and his Democratic general-election opponent, state Treasurer Kathleen Brown. The most gripping of these ads showed grainy INS security footage of illegal immigrants racing across freeways between cars and through fences, with an ominous voice-over growling the phrase, "They keep coming."

"It was demeaning to me as a Mexican-American to see pictures of Mexicans, like cattle, running across the street, with the voice saying 'They keep coming' as if we're animals and not human beings," said Antonio Amador, the Republican head of the non-partisan Latino Policy Forum and a Wilson appointee to the Public Employment Relations Board.

The controversial spot would prove to be the single-most influential political advertisement in the history of California politics. It worked well with the election calculus of the time, which discounted Latinos as a low-propensity "expendable" constituency. But it also irrevocably changed that calculus, driving tens of thousands of freshly minted citizens into the arms of the Democratic Party. Volunteers manning voter registration booths at naturalization ceremonies reported lines of applicants, many asking only that they be signed up for the "non-Wilson party." Wilson's subsequent advocacy of curbs on affirmative action and bilingual education only deepened Latino disenchantment with the GOP.

"The trend [toward greater civic involvement] got stronger, wider and deeper with 187 because immigrants got involved," said Antonio Gonzalez, president of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project. "Before, it was a Mexican-American trend. Now it's a Mexican immigrant trend, a Salvadoran trend, a Central American trend."

Crossing over and moving up

If Pete Wilson is the "father" of Latino political activism, then Polanco is the doctor who delivered it. A product of the "Old Guard" L.A. Latino faction that produced Assemblyman-turned-Councilman Richard Alatorre and current state Democratic Party chief Art Torres, Polanco was an early convert to the gospel of empowerment through naturalization and registration of the immigrants granted amnesty under IRCA.

"Back in the 1980s ... I showed him the statistics and he got it right away," said Pachon.

In early 1992, as an Assemblyman, Polanco began establishing himself as a kingmaker by challenging candidates backed by a political rival, L.A. County Supervisor Gloria Molina. But Polanco's breakthrough came the next year, when he helped engineer a special-election Assembly victory for an up-and-coming Latino politician from Fresno

chair of the Commission on Building for the 21st Century.

Henry Cisneros President, Univision Communications, Inc.

Cisneros rose to prominence as mayor of San Antonio, Texas. He joined the Clinton Administration as secretary of housing and urban development, but left under a cloud following disclosures of payments he made to a former mistress. Now living in Los Angeles and heading up the nation's largest Spanish-language television network, Cisneros still captivates Latino voters who, in a recent poll, said overwhelmingly they would like to see him return to public life.

Maria Contreras-Sweet Secretary, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

Governor Gray Davis plucked Contreras-Sweet from the business world for this top cabinet post. Formerly president of her own international marketing firm, Contreras-Sweet now heads the behemoth Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, overseeing 12 state departments, 40,000 employees and annual expenditures of $10 billion in state and federal funds. Contreras-Sweet is at the forefront of the Davis administration policy-making that will impact California's transportation, infrastructure, housing and health care systems. A native of Mexico, she co-chairs the Commission on Building for the 21st Century along with Bustamante.

Antonio Gonzalez President, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project

Outside of Pete Wilson, Gonzalez has probably done more than anyone esle to push new Latinos to the polls. As president of SVREP, Gonzalez spear-

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— Cruz Bustamante. By 1996, Polanco's political tentacles extended throughout the state, and Latino candidates began winning in such unlikely locales as Hayward, Stockton and Sacramento. Bustamante, the first Latino Assembly speaker in history, credits Polanco with "de-ghettoizing" Latino politics, and introducing a new catchphrase to the lexicon of ethnic politics in California: the "crossover candidate."

"He has masterfully, almost singlehandedly, done the job of creating the representation for Latinos that we currently have," said Huntington Park Mayor Rosario Marin, a Latina Republican who once served as a spokeswoman for Wilson. "Anybody with political savvy understands that he has done the job that he has set out to do."

The characteristic trademark of successful "crossover" politicians is that they are willing, indeed anxious, to move beyond the confines of issues traditionally identified with Latino politicians — immigration, English-language education, etc. — and speak to broader themes. While they don't deny their Latino heritage, their political identity is more closely linked to their district than to their ethnicity. Bustamante, Villaraigosa and the late Sacramento Mayor Joe Serna are perhaps the most visible examples of politicians who have successfully defined their image independent of ethnicity.

For those Latino politicians in districts that are not historically Hispanic, there's a pragmatic reason for going beyond their ethnicity. "Some Latinos can be bold on Latino activist issues but it'd be very hard for others politically because of their districts," said Molina. "You're not going to see them pontificating from the podium at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon for [an immigration bill]. But it doesn't make them any less Latino on those issues."

Even within the urban Los Angeles districts that have historically been the center of gravity for Latino politics, the issue mix has broadened and diversified. In 1997, Latinos turned out in record numbers in the off-year municipal elections in Los Angeles to support a massive school construction bond, Proposition BB. Polanco is among several Latino leaders who have sought a breakup of the behemoth Los Angeles Unified School District. And Latino Democrats such as Tony Cardenas campaign on their support for capital punishment and tougher gun laws.

The price of power

The success Latino politicians have had in entering the political mainstream has not come without a price. A Democratic Party power structure that traditionally has treated Latinos as junior partners has been forced to adjust

headed a registration strategy that targeted newly naturalized immigrants. A former organizer in Texas, Gonzalez has pushed for greater emphasis on U.S.-Latin American relations. Gonzalez also chairs the $430 million Los Angeles Community Development Bank, which targets investment in L.A.'s inner city, and the William Velasquez Institute, aimed at broadening Latinos' economic empowerment.

Monica Lozano Associate Publisher of *La Opinion*

At the helm of Southern California's preeminent Spanish language newspaper, Lozano showed her editorial clout in running repeated coverage galvanizing Latinos against Proposition 187. This year she became a player on a larger stage when Governor Gray Davis invited her along on his trip to Mexico and then appointed her to the state Board of Education. She'll also rub shoulders with some national heavyweights as host committee co-chair for the Democratic Party's national convention in Los Angeles this summer.

Mike Madrid Political Campaign Advisor

Republicans hoping to make inroads with Latino voters have a friend in Madrid, a guy with his finger on the pulse of the community's conservative streak. Madrid has made a career — albeit a short one since he's only 28 years old — of analyzing Latino voting trends and developing strategies to make the Republican party more attractive to this emerging group of voters. For two years Madrid advised the California Republican Party but jumped to the Legislature as press secretary for Rod Pacheco when he briefly became Assembly Minority leader.

Gloria Molina Los Angeles County Supervisor

Now in her third term as a Los Angeles County Supervisor, Molina is often touted as a potential mayoral candidate. A fierce advocate for the disadvantaged, Molina first entered the political scene as a state assemblywoman in 1982. After one term on the Los Angeles City Council, she defeated former state Senator Art Torres — her former boss — for her supervisorial seat. She sits on a number of influential boards including the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). She was recently rated the most admired Hispanic leader in a

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to a newly emboldened group of Latino leaders. The 1998 state Senate contest between former Assembly Democratic leader Richard Katz and then-Los Angeles City Councilman Richard Alarcon is a case-in-point.

In the final weekend of an exceptionally bitter primary (won by Alarcon), a direct-mail letter, signed by Polanco, left the unmistakable (and erroneous) impression that Katz had been involved with a 1988 Orange County incident in which uniformed poll guards were hired to intimidate Latino voters. In addition to a libel suit still pending on appeal, the political fallout of the flap was a rift between Polanco's Latino power base and the Westside liberal Jewish community. Tensions between the Westside and Latino communities deepened earlier this year during a drawn-out, and ultimately successful, effort to remove Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent Reuben Zacharias.

"There's a significant Latino-Jewish rift in L.A.," said one non-aligned insider who asked not to be identified. "There is a very strong sense on the part of Latino elites that, 'We now have the numbers and it's time for us to do our own thing.'"

A different, but no less troublesome, problem for the Democratic political coalition is the impact Latino demographic movement will have on the political power of African Americans. Once the most visible minority group in the Capitol, the number of blacks in the entire state Legislature now equals the number of Latino *Republicans* in the Assembly — four. Moreover, the Los Angeles-based districts currently represented by blacks have undergone dramatic demographic changes and many are now predominantly Latino. African American political leaders worry that the next reapportionment could further diminish black representation.

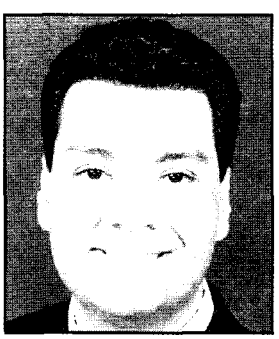
"It's important because of a long-standing concern about the lack of African American power in this country in general," said Democratic political consultant Darry Sragow. "It's a very significant development and should be approached [head-on]."

Latino leaders contend much of the reported tension between them and other Democratic constituency groups is overblown by the news media. Lines of communication have been formed with the African American community to address its concerns about the impact of redistricting. As for tensions with the Westside liberal establishment, many Latinos maintain it is simply a matter of receiving the respect they've earned.

But while the rest of the Democratic coalition tries to cope with the new Latino political activism, Latino leaders are dealing with a range of voices within their own commu-

national survey by *La Opinion* and the Univision television.

Alex Padilla
Los Angeles City Councilman



Just 26 years old when he beat a pack of six candidates to nab a seat on the Los Angeles City Council last year, Padilla represents a new generation of Latinos moving into middle class life in the San Fernando Valley. Padilla sowed the seeds of his fruitful council election by serving as campaign manager in the overlapping district now held by Assemblyman Tony Cardenas. A former staffer to U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, he ascended to the City Council with an additional boost from Republican Mayor Richard Riordan and former City Councilman Richard Alatorre.

Steve Perez
Kern County Board of Supervisors

Politically aggressive and conservative, Perez is viewed as a likely candidate for higher office someday. Now in his second term as Kern County supervisor, Perez previously spent 12 years as a deputy in the Kern County Sheriff's Department. This year he will be busy making the rounds at the capitol as president of the statewide Association of County Governments during its push for local fiscal reform.

Richard Polanco
State Senate Majority Leader

As majordomo of the Latino Caucus since 1991, Polanco (D-Los Angeles) has excelled at raising big bucks to help fellow Latinos win legislative seats. Among his election triumphs are Democratic state Senators Deborah Ortiz, Liz Figueroa and Richard Alarcon as well as Democratic Assemblyman Tony Cardenas. Termed out in 2002, Polanco would likely pursue a spot on the L.A. County Board of Supervisors if voters approve its expansion from five members to nine. A run for statewide office is also a possibility.

Loretta Sanchez
Congresswoman; Co-Chair, Democratic National Committee

Since 1996 when she knocked Republican Robert "Bob" Dornan off his perch to win the 46th congressional district seat, Sanchez (D-Anaheim) wasted no time making herself indispensable to constituents. With more than $200 million in federal dollars secured for her central Orange

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nity. Beyond simple factionalism, two distinct opinions have developed over how Latino political leaders should apply the power they've acquired. Polanco's approach generally has been to use his fund-raising and political influence to expand Latino representation in every branch of state government, and well beyond the traditional nexus of Los Angeles. Though he denies his agenda is "to elect more Latinos in and of itself," Polanco concedes his objective is to elect a body of elected officials that "better represents the people of California."

"Latinos waited a long time for someone to do [what Polanco is doing], but no one did it," said Polanco political consultant Richie Ross. "Now everybody's got a little bit of a problem ... 'Oh, well, it looks like you're using ethnicity to make these decisions.' O.K. EMILY's List uses gender. And it's correct. Gay people should use that, too."

Though she says she feels "tremendous pride" when Latinos and Latinas are elected to public office, Molina believes the issues around which Latino voters have mobilized — education, health care, jobs, etc. — are more important than the ethnicity of the standard bearer.

"If all we did [as a voting bloc] was elect other Latinos, we would be diminishing ourselves and our self-worth because that's not the future," said Molina, often described as a political rival of Polanco's. "It doesn't matter whether it's a Latino, an Asian or anything else. What's important is that we hold them accountable to our issues."

GOP plays catch-up

Of course, no matter how difficult the adjustments caused by the rise in Latino power, things could be worse for the old guard of the Democratic Party.

It could be the Republican Party.

As recently as the early 1990s, the GOP had been making slow, but measurable, inroads into the Latino electorate, targeting middle-class second- and third-generation Hispanics who were beginning to move into the suburbs. But in 1994, the GOP reversed course with its outspoken advocacy of Proposition 187, and since has continued alienating Latinos with almost clinical precision. Not only was the party identified with efforts to ban affirmative action and bilingual education in subsequent elections, but its leadership was strangely tone-deaf to the vibes it was sending out. After its first post-187 drubbing in 1996, the party elected as its chair Michael Schroeder, the attorney who represented former Representative Robert Dornan in Dornan's high-decibel bid to unseat Latina Democrat Loretta Sanchez.

"There is a bubble of people who began voting [during this period] that we will probably never get back," said Mike Madrid, one-time political director for the state GOP who also served as a spokesman for former Assembly Minority Leader Rod Pacheco.

Madrid, who has researched Latino voting behavior, believes there is still an opportunity to, at minimum, stop the hemorrhaging. He and others argue that the taint left on the party by Wilson is already starting to fade, and they also believe their fortunes will be aided by a strong showing in California by the GOP's presidential front-runner, Texas Governor George W. Bush.

County district and weekly trips home for "meet-'n'-greets" with hometown voters, Sanchez has established herself as a quick study. Last year President Bill Clinton asked Sanchez to co-chair the Democratic National Committee with Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer and former Colorado Governor Roy Romer, who serves as chair.

Hilda Solis
Chair, State Senate Industrial Relations Committee

State Senator Solis (D-La Puente) hasn't shied away from challenging the old boy network both within and without the Latino community. In 1998, she mobilized fellow women state senators to support John Burton over Democratic rival Richard Polanco for president pro tempore. As chair of the Industrial Relations Committee, she has been instrumental in pushing organized labor's agenda. Now she has her sights set on a seat in Congress with plans to challenge long-time Democratic Congressman Matthew Martinez.

Antonio Villaraigosa
Assembly Speaker

Elected to the Assembly in 1994 in his first run for public office, Villaraigosa (D-Mount Washington) quickly made his mark and was crowned Speaker just three years later. He'll leave the post in the spring as one of its most prodigious fund-raisers and as the longest-serving speaker since Willie Brown. If his 2001 Los Angeles mayoral bid is successful, he will become the city's first Latino mayor in modern times.

— Compiled by Kathleen Les, Associate Editor of the California Journal.

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"Everything that [Wilson's] opponents had against him, they don't have with George W.," said Marin. "Latinos will have a choice where they didn't have one before."

California's GOP leadership also has taken some concrete steps toward reconnecting with Latino voters. The four-member Assembly Latino Republican Caucus formed its own political action committee, aimed at recruiting and supporting Latino Republicans for local elected office. "It's a sort of a farm team, if you will, so that one day they will be in the Legislature," said Assemblywoman Charlene Zettel (R-Poway).

And state Senate Minority Caucus Chair Jim Brulte (R-Rancho Cucamonga) shocked his party's faithful in 1999 when he announced he was not going to offer his financial support to white male candidates.

Some dismiss the GOP outreach efforts as a waste of time. "I think they're whistling past the graveyard," said Ross. "Right now, they have no evidence to base any of their theories on."

Many others, however, believe the GOP could regain some momentum with Latinos if the party targets the right issues and Democrats become complacent.

"The [Democratic] lock isn't that secure still," said Pachon. "The door is still open, but any strong wind is going to shut that door."

The wind blowing most ominously across the GOP's threshold is another version of Proposition 187. Submitted by one of the co-authors of the original initiative, "Son of 187" would re-institute portions of the original. Some GOP sources indicate that efforts to convince the sponsors to withdraw or postpone their initiative have reached all the way to the Bush campaign itself.

"If I were a Democrat and I wanted to finally put a stake in the heart of the Republican Party, I would surreptitiously fund it," said Amador.

Whether the GOP effort to quash the initiative is successful, it suggests that both parties have accepted the reality of changing electoral demographics. Gonzalez says his organization plans to refocus its registration efforts in the coming year and expects to add as many as 400,000 new Latino voters to the rolls, bringing the total number to more than 2.5 million. As many as 40 percent of these new voters will likely register decline-to-state, suggesting the two parties face the same challenges wooing Latinos that they do with the rest of the electorate (See "The No-Party System, *CJ*, December 1999). But if past experience is any indication, these voters are more than prepared to reward candidates receptive to their interests and punish candidates who aren't.

"The bottom line is we all want the same thing," said Los Angeles City Councilman Alex Padilla. "Job opportunities, education, quality of life. The 'Latino agenda' is an American agenda. It's the American Dream."

Steve Scott is political editor of California Journal. *Comments on this story may be sent to* edit@statenet.com.

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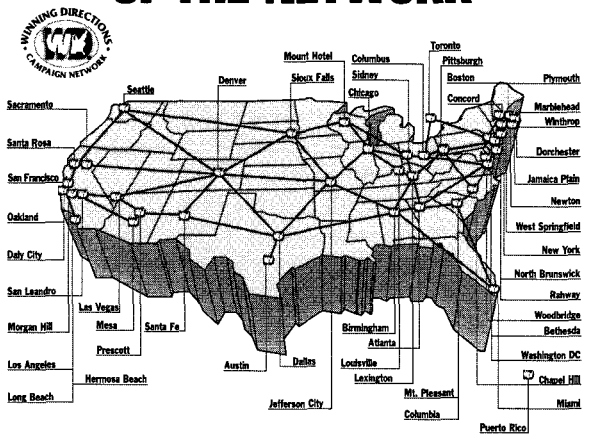

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The electability of Latina lawmakers

Gloria Molina stood on the doorstep, attempting to persuade the skeptical union worker to vote for the young woman standing before him. It was a blue-collar, working-class neighborhood in Los Angeles' Eastside in 1982, and Molina was walking house-to-house, ringing doorbells to ask voters to support her candidacy for the state Assembly. But the union worker flat-out refused. "Why should I throw away my vote on you? No one will treat you seriously; you'll be ignored," she recalls him saying.

Long overlooked by their community's kingmakers, Hispanic women are proving their political appeal by winning office in greater numbers. What's the secret to their political success?

By Claudia Buck

Today, having made history as the first Hispanic woman elected to the state Legislature and gone on to become a nationally respected Latina politician, Molina still vividly remembers that front-porch encounter.

"I took that very seriously," recalls the former legislator, currently in her third term as a Los Angeles County supervisor. "We (Latinas) had to set an example. We had to show them we were capable and hardworking. It was like being the first-born, setting the example for the rest of the kids."

Molina led the way, and "the rest of the kids" — Latina politicians like herself — followed her footsteps into the Capitol and political corridors throughout California. Of the 23 Latino officeholders currently in the Legislature, 10 are women. Latinas are getting elected to school boards, city councils, and county supervisorial seats. Two of California's Congress members are Hispanic women.

Indeed, Latina politicians may be the fastest-sprouting segment of the political landscape. Observers say it's because they've risen from hard-working, well-educated backgrounds, pay more attention to policy than politics, and share the same "bread-and-butter" concerns as mainstream Californians. Ultimately, they are seen by some as less threatening and better able to connect with voters than Latino men.

Taken by surprise

"The Hispanic power structure has always focused on Latino males," said Sue Burnside, owner of Burnside & Associates, a national political consulting firm based in Los Angeles. "But Latinas came up and surprised everybody. They showed that they were electable."

That reality "sort of flips logic on its head," said Leo Briones, a Los Angeles-based political consultant. "There's a perception that Hispanics are a chauvinistic, pro-male culture but when you go down the line of elected Hispanics, women have done very well. People misjudge the role of women

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in the Latino culture. There's a great comfort level with women making public policy decisions."

Getting there has not been easy. Many of the state's Latina lawmakers are from immigrant families and have struggled to become the first to earn a college degree. As candidates they've also struggled to raise campaign dollars in a political world that often discounts women candidates in general and minority women in particular, what Assemblywoman Denise Moreno Ducheny (D-San Diego) calls "the double bind for Latinas."

And nearly all say they've also had to battle for respect from their Latino male counterparts.

"It's a remarkable cadre of women," said Rosario Marin, a Latina Republican and mayor of Huntington Beach. "They're prepared, skilled, and they're willing to go and fight the good fight. They've overcome tremendous obstacles over their lives that prepare them for center stage."

Obstacles in their path

Some of those obstacles come from within their own families. Loretta Sanchez, now in her second term in Congress, recalls that when she bought her first home, her father didn't speak to her for two years because she hadn't asked for his help. "In most American families, if you have a kid and they buy their first house, you're very proud. But in my culture, it was a negative to be so independent."

Even more daunting are the obstacles presented by some of their own Latino counterparts. Sanchez, for one, still recalls that during her first election against the combative Republican incumbent, Robert "B-1 Bob" Dornan, all the traditional institutions — the L.A.-based Hispanic power structure, the Democratic Party, even EMILY's List — placed "tremendous insignificance on my candidacy." The same scenario prevailed a year later during her re-election campaign when fellow Democrat Lou Correa was running for the Assembly district that's nested within her congressional boundaries.

"The majority of help (from the Latino political machine) came to him, not me," says Sanchez. In the same way that Anglo women at times find themselves ignored by a power structure dominated by white males, Sanchez said, "the Latino system also discounts women. It doesn't help them get elected."

She contends her story is not unique. "Almost every Latina has a story like that. We have to work that much harder because the money and machinery isn't there."

But that's not how state Democratic Party chairman Art Torres remembers it. He said Sanchez was supported in her primary fight by three Latino officials — congress members Xavier Becerra, Lucille Roybal-Allard and Esteban Torres. And during the general election fight, Torres said he "spent a bundle" helping Sanchez. Furthermore, Torres said the party's get-out-the-vote efforts for Sanchez and Correa in both 1996 and '98 were "equal expenditures."

Perhaps the backbone of Latina success is family. During her 1996 race, Sanchez' two sisters and four brothers walked Orange County precincts, knocking on doors. "It gave people a sense of how sincere we were, that we were part of the community. Who knows me better than my sister? She knows what my values are."

Briones calls this dynamic *"comradre,"* the social network that binds families together — even at the voting booth. "A vestige of that Old World rural lifestyle," Briones says word-of-mouth endorsements in the Hispanic community carry huge clout – and they're often prodded and pushed by the family's matriarch. When he ran Assemblyman Tony Cardenas' 1996 race, Briones said "there'd be 10

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to 30 people in a family saying we're voting for Tony. And it was the mother who organized everyone."

The ties that bind

"Latino women play a very nurturing role within their communities and in no way is that negative," said Briones, who is married to state Senator Martha Escutia (D-Huntington Park). "It translates into politics that's geared toward health care, education, public safety: the bread-and-butter issues that people vote for."

Says Ducheny, "We tend to work collectively because many of us come from big families. There's more of a willingness to listen to the other side. To the extent that people are skeptical of politicians, Latina candidates are seen as sincere and not as threatening as politicians can sometimes be."

State Senator Hilda Solis (D-La Puente) says Latinas are connecting with voters because "the concerns we're able to voice are broader than our own district's borders. I can talk about issues that go beyond San Gabriel Valley or East L.A.," said Solis, who is running against incumbent Matthew Martinez for Congress next year.

Latinas are simply more concerned with solving problems than playing politics, says Molina. "I know it sounds sexist," said the veteran politician, "but when you talk with Latinas (women), it's about issues, about legislation, about what they're working on. When it's a group of Latino men, it's about what chairmanship they're after...where they've been and where they're going."

One of those, former Senator Torres, said he agrees. "It's partially true, which is why we needed women in the Legislature. Women tend to gravitate to issues, instead of power." But Torres added that many of those power-dominated conversations by Latino men in the early years laid the groundwork for getting more Hispanics elected.

Other legislators see ethnic heritage as irrelevant in winning elections. In Assemblywoman Nell Soto's last race in 1998, Democrats held only a 7 percent lead in voter registration. Yet she won by some 13 percent — proof, she says, that she earned crossover votes.

"I don't think they saw a Latina. I don't think they saw a woman," says the Pomona Democrat. "They saw a person who had integrity and ethics and a record of accomplishment under her belt. I just made a lot more sense than my opponent."

She feels the same was true of her late husband, former Assemblyman Phillip Soto, who in 1962 became the first of two Latinos elected in modern history to the Legislature. But in a district then dominated by a largely WASP voter base, Soto says her husband was elected because voters "thought he was a good Democrat."

Likewise, Assemblywoman Charlene Zettel, the only GOP Hispanic woman in the state Legislature, says it wasn't her ethnic identity that got her first elected in 1998.

Charlene Zettel

Eileen Padberg

Martha Escutia

The name game

"I don't think it mattered. Most people are unaware of my heritage," said Zettel, whose maiden name is Gonzales but who has used Zettel since she married 29 years ago.

Now that she's in the Legislature, the former Poway school board member says "I do feel a responsibility to be a positive role model. When you're first, forging new ground, you need to be careful that what people see is good."

That's a lesson she learned as a child. The daughter of a meat cutter and an immigrant mother who, at age 75, still works in a labor union office, Zettel said she was taught "to be exemplary because people will generalize: 'Oh, you're behaving that way because you're Mexican.'"

Several Latina Democrats predicted that Zettel will not remain the sole GOP Latina for long. Zettel is less an anomaly than "a portent of things to come," said Molina.

"People make generalizations that all Latinos are Democrats. We need to dispel that," said Zettel. "People are always asking me why I don't use my family name (Gonzales). I'm thinking of it because perhaps using my maiden name would be helpful for the party."

But some consultants say it's not a Spanish surname that wins elections. "In a heavily Latino district, it may be helpful to be Latina but, in general, ethnicity is not the issue," said Eileen Padberg, a longtime GOP political consultant in Orange County. "Whether they be Latina, Asian or whatever, women will fare better in upcoming election years because women want to vote for women."

In her first Assembly race in 1992, Escutia focused on cutting exorbitant hospital costs. That issue took shape after she was hospitalized and was charged $5 for a toothbrush and another $5 for two aspirins.

"Anybody could have spoken about that issue but no one was talking about it. It wasn't on the established political radar screens," recalls Escutia. But it hit home with voters, who handed her a victory.

With their added numbers comes greater clout, which Torres and others see as the next step for Latinas.

Solis, the daughter of immigrants from Mexico and Nicaragua, points to her chairmanship of the Senate's Industrial Relations Committee. "It's sending a message to California that change is possible, even in the Senate, and it's positive. It's reflective of changes in our society, that Latinas have the talents and skills that are now being recognized."

As the pioneer who carried the first torch, Molina predicts it won't be long before the next Assembly speaker is an Hispanic woman. "When you think of where we've come, it's been an amazing century for us."

Claudia Buck is an associate editor of California Journal. *Comments may be sent to* edit@statenet.com.

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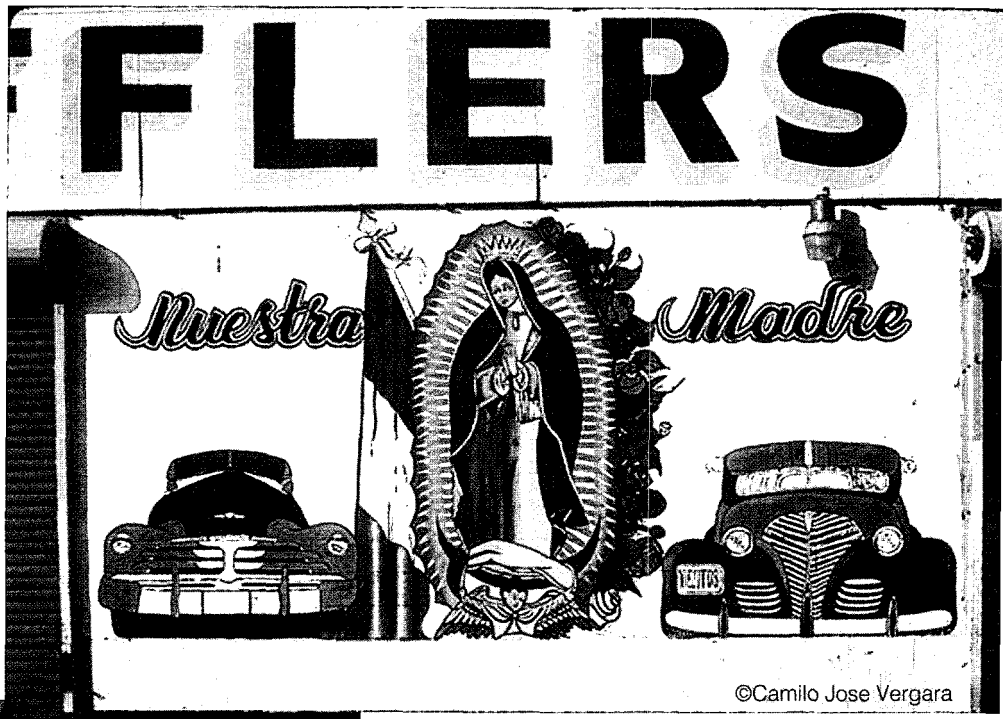
El Nuevo Mundo:

Latinos in La-la-land.

Far from the rolling, lush boulevards of the West Side, or the funky, busy bike lanes along Venice Beach, the L.A. community of Camilo Jose Vergara's imagination is "the hot, flat and poor part of Los Angeles County, where junkyards and abandoned factories are located, where dogs bark in the alleys — an area my friend Raul calls 'the next city of Mexico north of Tijuana.'"



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Here in this city, Vergara's camera captures, among other scenes, a population explosion of the Virgin of Guadalupe, "the mother of all Mexicans" whose likeness watches over all who believe. His lens records the vibrant color, rural flavor, superstition, spirituality and energy of distinctly Latino neighborhoods that become even more Mexican — if it is possible — every year. Vergara writes, "When I showed Mexicans in Mexico my photographs...they responded with such phrases as, 'just like in Mexico' or 'a little Mexico.'

"Dogs, chickens, rabbits, and domestic birds abound," Vergara writes, "reminders of the rural origins of the residents. Corn often grows in the front yards, chickens run along the sidewalks, and the carcasses of dogs killed in clandestine dogfights sometimes dot the alleys. Even though recent Mexican immigrants have established their cultural presence in Los Angeles, they still long for their native land. And with the Mexican border only three hours away, there is a constant stream of visitors and exchange of goods between Latinos on both sides of the border."

Indeed, it's a new world for the forgotten L.A.

Camilo Jose Vergara's online photography exhibit at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum at the Smithsonian Institution can be viewed at **www.si.edu/ndm/exhib/vergara.** *Vergara will exhibit "El Nuevo Mundo: Landscape of Latino Los Angeles" at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County January 29 - July 16, 2000, and at* **www.nhm.org.**

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Envisioning L.A. Latino politics

by Sherry Bebitch Jeffe

A half-century ago, the political empowerment of Latinos was embodied in Los Angeles City Councilman (later Congressman) Edward Roybal, the first Latino in modern history to serve on the city's governing body. How things have changed! Latino political leadership in Los Angeles has multiplied and diversified; power is diffuse. The new century will only intensify positioning for primacy among emerging Latino leaders.

When powerful Eastside City Councilman, and former Assemblyman, Richard Alatorre retired last year, the leader of a major Latino political faction left the scene. State Senator Richard Polanco, an Alatorre ally who replaced him in the state Assembly, has become a player in city politics.

Polanco built his own power base as Senate majority leader, working to elect Latino candidates statewide, even in districts that are not heavily Latino.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina, who beat Polanco in his first try for Assembly, emerged to spearhead the other political camp. She defied Alatorre and old-line Latino power brokers in 1982, to become the first Latina elected to the California Legislature. Molina went on to win election to the Los Angeles City Council and Board of Supervisors, often clashing with Alatorre, Polanco and their allies.

"Today," observed one activist, "there is no dominant political machine...There is no longer one single 'cartel.'

The 2001 election for Los Angeles mayor may clarify things. Incumbent Richard Riordan is termed out and among the potential candidates to replace him are Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa and Congressman Xavier Becerra.

By virtue of his legislative leadership role, the Speaker has become a player in Los Angeles Latino politics — and a rival to Polanco.

Although running for re-election, Congressman Becerra is increasingly mentioned as a potential mayoral candidate. Politically, Becerra has been labeled "an independent actor," who won election to replace Roybal by defeating Roybal's anointed heir apparent.

Waiting in the wings are a slew of young, "Generation Mex" office-holders. They include freshmen council members Nick Pacheco and Alex Padilla. Padilla now represents the same Valley district Alarcon did; he won with the support of Valley Assemblyman Tony Cardenas (D-Sylmar) against a rival backed by Alarcon. Cardenas and Padilla had once been Alarcon's allies.

Pacheco had the backing of Becerra, while his losing opponent, Victor Griego, ran with the support of Villaraigosa.

Assemblyman Gil Cedillo, elected with Villaraigosa's help, is a potential speaker after Assemblyman Robert Hertzberg is termed out in 2002 — if, as expected, Hertzberg replaces Villaraigosa. Spheres of political influence now reach beyond the Latino community's elected leadership. The past few years have seen a rejuvenation of the political power of organized labor in California. In Los Angeles, much of the credit goes to a new generation of younger — and mostly Latino — leaders, such as Miguel Contreras, the executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

> "Today," observed one activist, "there is no dominant political machine...."

Labor's influence in Los Angeles is enhanced by the clout of current Latino — and labor-backed — leaders, such as Villaraigosa, a former union organizer and Cedillo, a former service employee union leader.

Several factors mitigate against a return to the "patron" days of Latino political leadership. Dispersal of population centers means dispersal of power centers. The impact of Latino empowerment — and the proliferation of Latino power centers — will be heightened when state and local legislative districts are redrawn after the 2000 census.

Term limits will also be a factor in dispersing political power among a number of "entrepreneurial" short-termers. It's unlikely any Los Angeles politician — of any ethnicity — will be able to match Alatorre's 28-year electoral tenure and the clout that came with it.

Latino politics in Los Angeles have matured, reflecting and fueling Latino empowerment statewide. What's ahead?

Gabriel Buelna is a student at Claremont Graduate University who studies and lives the new Latino politics of Los Angeles. He voices the essence of the debate over who shall lead in the 21st century. "The question for the future," Buelna argues, is "who has a vision for California — and for Latinos."

Contributing Editor Sherry Bebitch Jeffe teaches at the Claremont Graduate University. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the California Journal.

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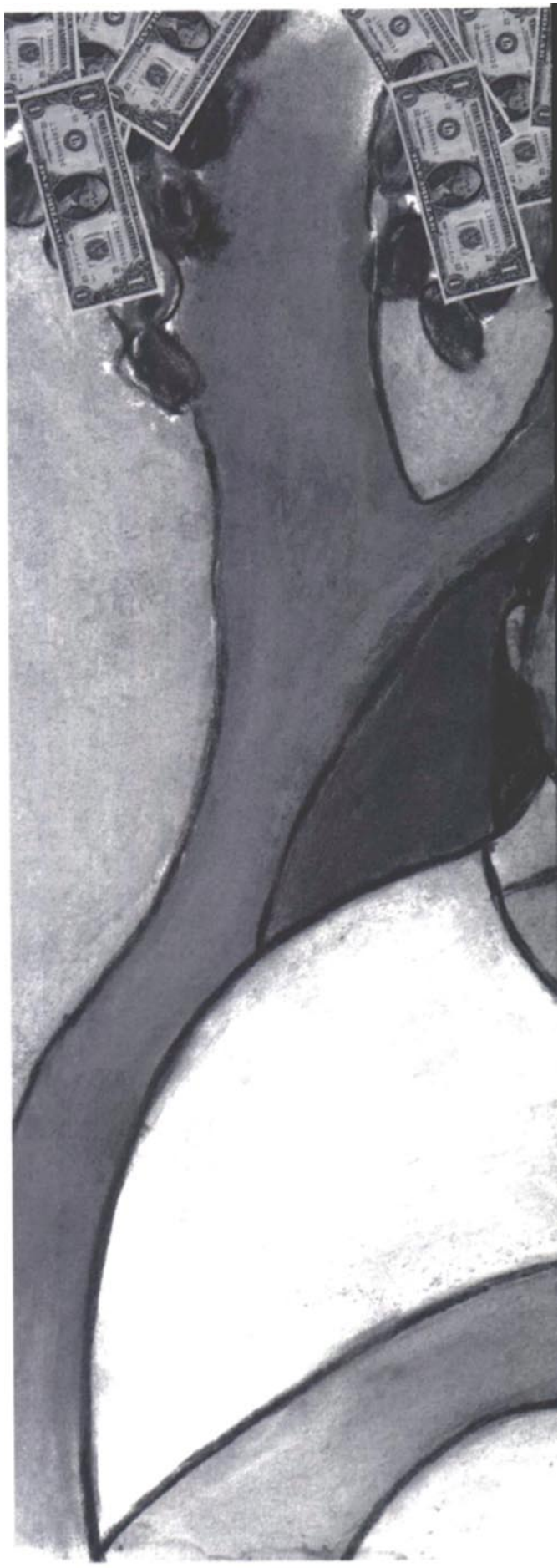
Latino commerce surges ahead

California plays host to more than double the national average of Latino-owned businesses, with estimates pegging the statewide total at 600,000. An ethic of hard work, sacrifice and perseverance is the backbone of the trend, and may be underpinning the entire state's prosperity.

By Emelyn Rodriguez



As a girl growing up in East Los Angeles, Ruth Lopez Williams lived in a world of duty, prayer and work. She was imbued with stories of her grandmother washing clothes, sewing buttons and ironing laundry to help put food on the table and earn a little extra cash. Then there were the shopkeepers, the bakers working the *panaderías* and the street vendors pushing tamale carts or hawking flowers on sidewalks.

In those days, there was no fancy term for what they did. People were simply doing what was necessary to survive and provide for their families.

"This entrepreneurial spirit is very common among Latinos. But they never labeled it 'entrepreneurship'," said Williams, now chief executive officer of Viva Health Services, a large health care firm in Southern California. "Whether it was selling Avon or

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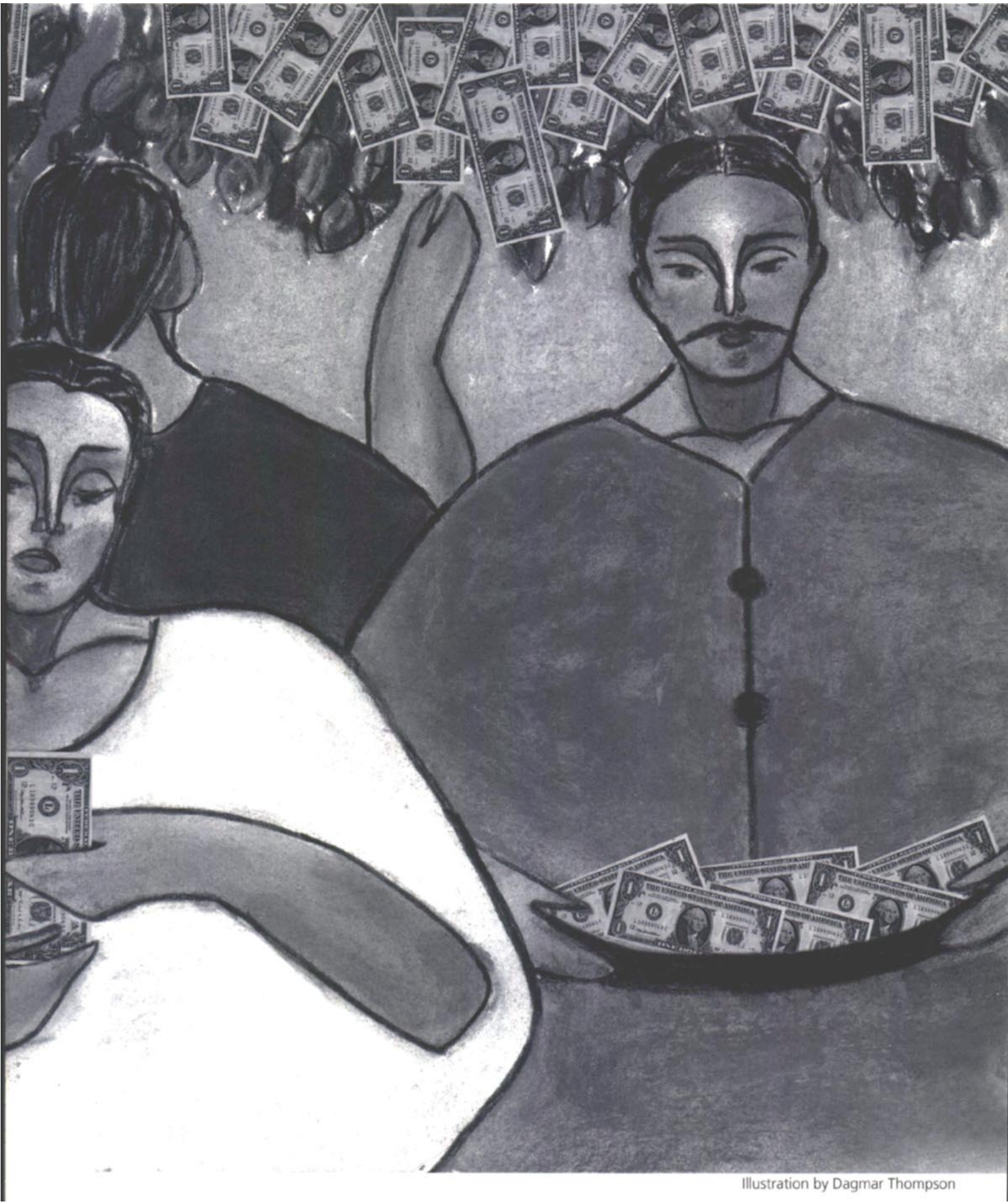

Illustration by Dagmar Thompson

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doing odd jobs, it was just seen as earning a living."

Today, decades of quiet growth have blossomed into a full-blown Latino business boom that some economic experts say is contributing significantly to, if not driving, economic prosperity in California and beyond. From 1987 to 1997, the number of Latino-owned businesses nationwide rose to 1.4 million, a 232 percent increase, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration. During the same period, revenues for this sector increased by an estimated 417 percent. Overall, Latina-owned businesses are the fastest growing segment.

The explosion is most evident in states and metropolitan areas with high concentrations of Latinos. California, for instance, hosted a full third of the 1987-1992 growth in Latino firms nationwide, says the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Most of the new companies are small, *madre-y-padre* operations in low-visibility fields in the service and retail industries — the bedrock of traditional Latino enterprise. However, some recent start-ups are carving into rapid-growth fields such as technology, science, medicine and construction — industries riding the crest of a roaring economy.

Williams is one of those pioneers. She runs a thriving, spreading network of health services in El Monte with her older brother, a physician. Business is so good they have expanded to Guatemala and Mexico.

It was as a child, Williams says, that she learned the ingredients of being a successful entrepreneur. The work ethic is ingrained in Mexican culture, she said. She learned by watching family and friends toil and earn their livings using whatever resources and skills they possessed: whether through housekeeping, doing odd jobs or selling cosmetics. Her mother, a Mexican orphan, and her father, a former postal worker-turned-minister, both emphasized the value of education.

Burning the candle

"Our parents were very inspirational in pointing us to the goal and helping us refocus when we lost our way," said Williams, who earned a masters degree in business administration from Pepperdine University. "My father preached education. He saw that it helped people move up into positions he couldn't reach because he didn't have an education."

Becky Campo, founder, Patterson Financial

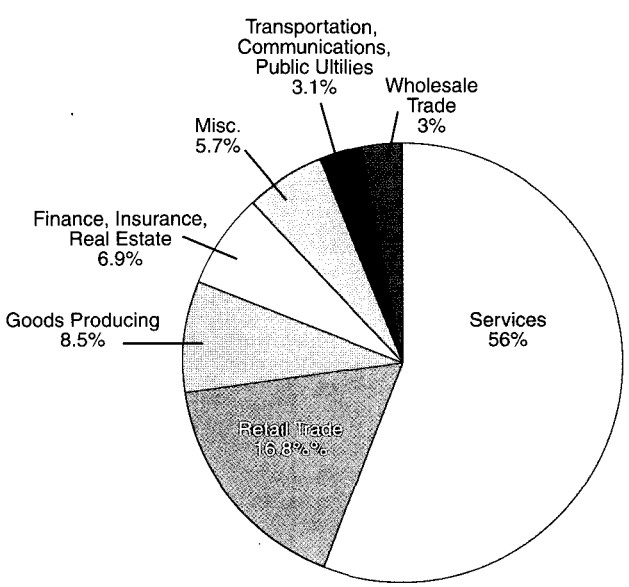
Analysts, economists, government officials and Latino trailblazers say the phenomenon of Latino business growth cannot be explained by any single trend, but rather is driven by a blend of cultural, political and economic factors.

"It's a combination of things," said José Peréz, founder of the *Latino Journal*, a Sacramento-based magazine established in 1996 for Latino business owners. "The Latino population is growing and that is impacting the aggregate numbers. It is a population with a very strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit. Plus the economy is good, which benefits all business owners."

Perez, who worked 23 years for the California Department of Transportation before starting his own firm, said he quit his job as a Caltrans executive because he saw a business opportunity too good to pass up. Like a surfer "eyeballing a wave that's coming," he paid close attention to his timing. For

Latina-Owned Firms

Largest Share in Service Sector



Source: The National Foundation for Women Business Owners

Facts:

- Over 1/3 (33%) of firms owned by persons of Latino descent are owned by women.
- More than 1/2 of the Latina-owned firms (56%) are in the services industry, 17% are in retail, and 9% are in manufacturing.
- The greatest growth in the number of Latina-owned firms has been in non-traditional sectors. Between 1987 to 1996, the number of Latina-owned firms has grown 428% in construction, 389% in agriculture and 338% in wholesale trade.
- Ethnic groups included in the Hispanic business census are: Mexican (46.8% of all Latino-owned firms), Central American (21.3%), Cuban (11.9%), European Spanish (7%), Puerto Rican (6%), other (7%).

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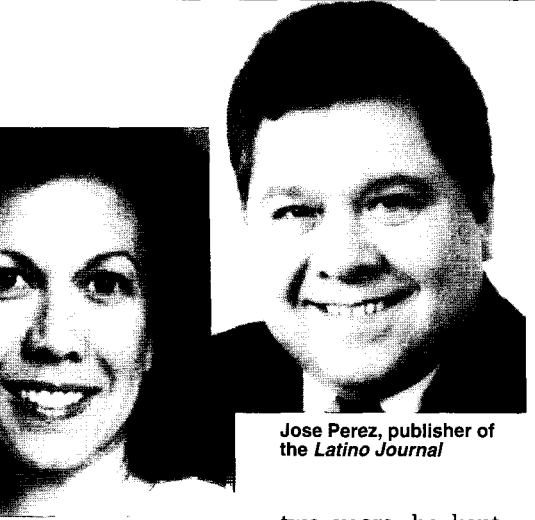

Jose Perez, publisher of the *Latino Journal*

n Lopez Williams, CEO, Health Services

two years, he kept on working for the state, while putting in an evening shift at his magazine.

"I was burning the candle at both ends and doing a lot of terrible things to my health. But I loved it," said Perez, president of the Sacramento Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. "I probably worked harder than I ever had in my life."

Perez said he launched his enterprise for "pure capitalist reasons." But he is quick to admit there are other advantages as well. "It gives me more freedom," he said. "When you work in government, you're given instructions and expected to carry them out like a foot soldier. I always felt that was stifling....With your own business, you're free to follow your own vision."

Like many Latino entrepreneurs, Perez is bullishly optimistic. He expects to expand the magazine's 42,000 circulation in California and throughout the Southwest.

Indeed, a study of large Southern California-based Latino enterprises found that executives at more than two-thirds of the 273 firms surveyed expect sales to increase next year, with only 1 percent anticipating a decrease. Also, most companies expect to add staff or expand, reports the Latin Business Association Institute.

Lagging in high-tech

That same report, however, reveals that Latino-owned businesses fall behind in their use of information technology. Less than half of the businesses surveyed had a Web site and half of those with sites did not sell their products or services on the Internet.

"This represents an untapped market potential for information technology companies," said Harry Pachon, president of the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, a non-profit research group that focuses on issues of concern to the Latino community.

Studies in recent years are just beginning to flesh out the people — such as Williams and Perez — behind the surging numbers. They offer glimpses of the demographics, attitudes, outlooks and challenges of the burgeoning number of Latino entrepreneurs.

Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda, research director of the North American Integration and Development Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, has conducted surveys of small, immigrant-owned businesses. His research shows that in Los Angeles, Latino-owned businesses have more than doubled in the last seven years, from 177,000 in 1992 to about 440,000 by the end of 1999. Nearly 40 percent of these Southern California businesses are owned by immigrants and the vast majority of Latino business owners are of Mexican descent.

"What's interesting is that a lot of these businesses are much higher exporters compared to others in the small business profile," Hinojosa-Ojeda said. "They are increasingly involved in joint ventures with foreign small businesses — therefore creating jobs on both sides of the border. This is a very important part of the growth of companies involved in U.S.-Mexico trade. The numbers have mushroomed from 10,000 to about 30,000 in the past five years."

Many Latino-business owners acquire knowledge and skills working in a particular trade such as manufacturing, construction or the restaurant business, then use their experience to start their own firms in those fields, Hinojosa-Ojeda said. Latino enterprises also benefit from the reliable labor of family members, while providing relatives with stable sources of employment and income.

Latino business owners also appear to be tenacious, not easily deterred by obstacles. "They try to make it even if they do not come from relatively privileged backgrounds," Hinojosa-Ojeda said. "Why is that? Immigrants having already crossed some barriers are not necessarily willing to have new barriers get in their way. When they come here and find economic stability in a regular job, some say, 'Why not try the next stage?' So they start their own businesses.

"Then, those with established firms, say, 'Why not take it to the next level?' Then they get involved in inter-

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national trade."

Not all is rosy

Yet while some are prospering, others are seeing their fortunes decline or stagnate. The median annual salary of Latinos in California is $14,560, the lowest of any racial or ethnic group measured, according to the California Research Bureau. Education levels for Latinos in the labor force are woefully low compared to other groups, with 44.7 percent not completing high school compared to 7.9 percent for non-Latinos.

"There is a growing inequality in the Latino community to the extent that some people are making it and others are not," said Hinojosa-Ojeda.

Many of those who do make it cite the challenge, independence, flexibility and opportunity for prosperity as driving forces.

"It is an attractive option for someone who wants to be more in control of their life, someone who wants to have more time to spend with their family," said Waldo Lopez-Aqueres, director of economic policy research with the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute. "The economy is strong now too and I think that entices people to try to make it on their own."

Latino-owned businesses comprise 11 percent of all businesses in California, more than twice the national figure. In 1999, California's top grossing Latino-owned businesses — 116 companies — generated revenue of $3.1 billion, up from $2.6 billion in 1997, reports *Hispanic Business Magazine.*

Current estimates place the number of Latino-owned firms in California at up to 600,000 and up to 2 million nationwide.

Some Latino entrepreneurs end up striking out on their own to rebel against barriers like the so-called "glass ceiling" or a lack of fulfillment at their steady jobs.

Becky Campo was an emergency dispatcher for 11 years for the U.S. Department of Defense before starting her own financial services firm. The Lathrop base where she worked was once a thriving depot during the Cold War, but had become a mere skeleton of its old self.

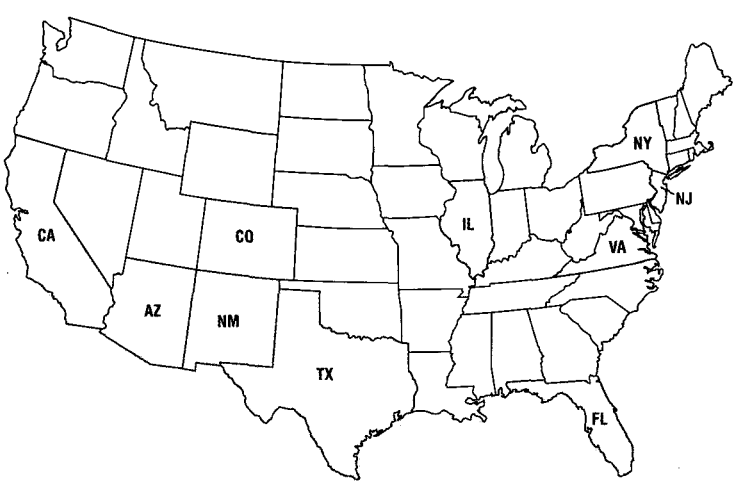
"It was a secure job, but with the cutbacks I felt there would be no upward mobility for some time," said Campo, a Patterson City Council member who is active in the group Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE), a non-profit group aimed at increasing Latina participation in politics. "What once was exciting became boring. I was at a job that wasn't using all my skills and knowledge...I felt like I was receiving welfare for just showing up at work."

Looking for a greater challenge, Campo expanded her part-time, at-home, tax preparation business with $10,000 seed money she borrowed from her mortgage equity. She founded Patterson Financial in June 1999 and now works with relatives assisting primarily Latino home buyers with financing options, income tax preparation, notary and some immigration services.

"I knew I wanted my own business," said Campo, who came to the U.S. from Mexico in 1976. "I always wanted to be my own boss. As immigrants, we saw what our parents went through. The long hours, the hard work, the low pay. We realized getting families involved and entrepreneurship is the path."

Emelyn Rodriguez is senior editor of California Journal. *Comments on this article may be sent to* edit@statenet.com.

Top 10 States for Latina-Owned Firms



Sources: The National Foundation for Women Business Owners, 1996, U.S. Small Business Administration, Tomas Rivera Policy Institute.

Facts:

- In fiscal year 1997, the U.S. Small Business Administration backed 3,371 loans to Latino entrepreneurs, representing an increase of more than 149% since 1992.
- The number of Latino-owned businesses increased more rapidly in the period of 1987-97 than did other types of minority-owned businesses. The Hispanic growth rate was 232% compared with the 180% for Asian-owned businesses, and 108% for African-American owned businesses.
- Latino-owned businesses accounted for 37% or $184 billion of the $495 billion all minority-owned businesses generated in 1997.
- From 1987 to 1997, revenues grew (after factoring out inflation) by an estimated 417% for Latino-owned businesses.
- The number of Latino-owned firms in the U.S. reached 2 million in 1999. In California, Latino firms numbered 600,000 in 1999.

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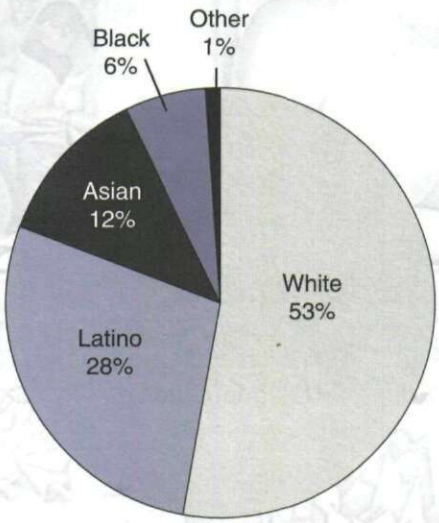
By the numbers: Hispanics

Employment

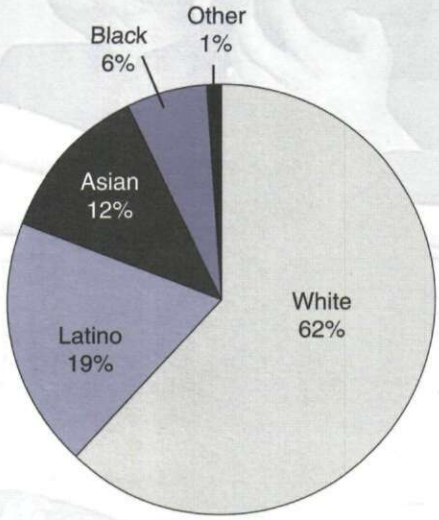
Labor Force Composition

Latinos comprised the second-largest group of California's 15.6 million workers in 1998.



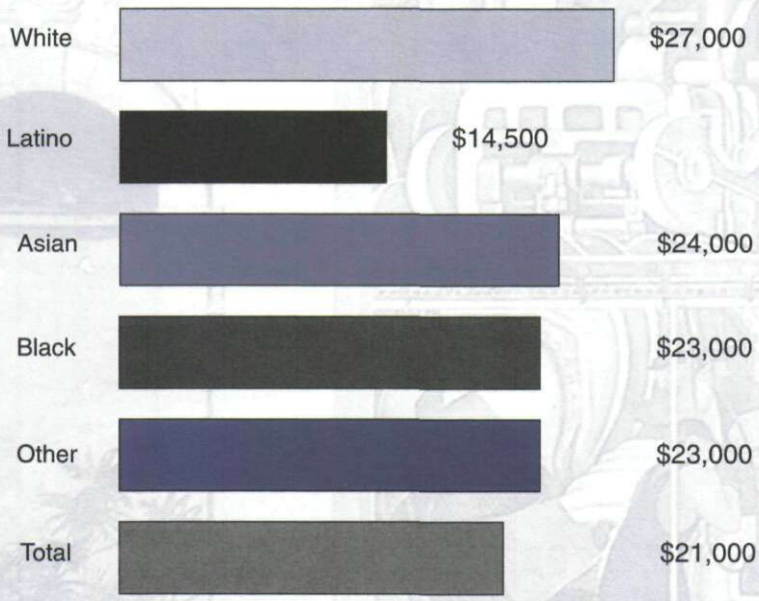
Wages by Group

Latinos are 28% of the labor force, but account for only 19% of the aggregate wages.



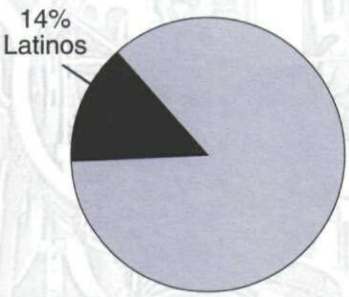
Median Wage Income

The wages of Latinos are the lowest of any group of workers, with a median wage of $14, 560.

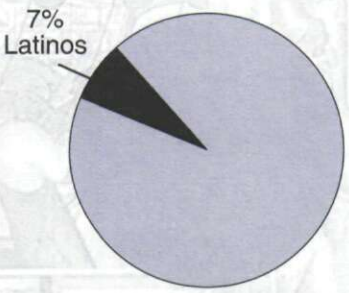


Bay Area Work force

Latinos in the Bay Area work force, 1998



Latinos employed by Silicon Valley high-tech firms, 1998



Sources: California Research Bureau, San Francisco Chronicle Survey
The screened background image is one wall of a fresco painted by Diego Rivera in the Detroit Institute of the Arts honoring America's auto workers.

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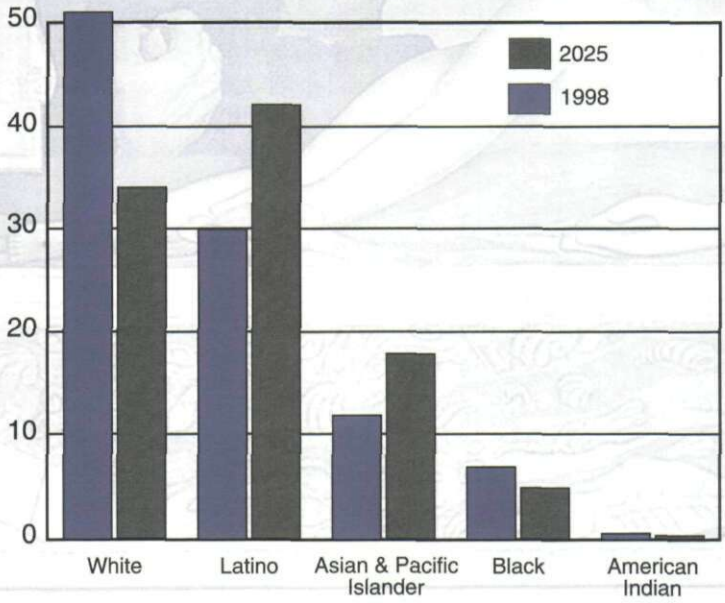
Population

Ethnic Population

Latinos will be the largest ethnic group among the working age population in 2025, representing 42% of the work force.

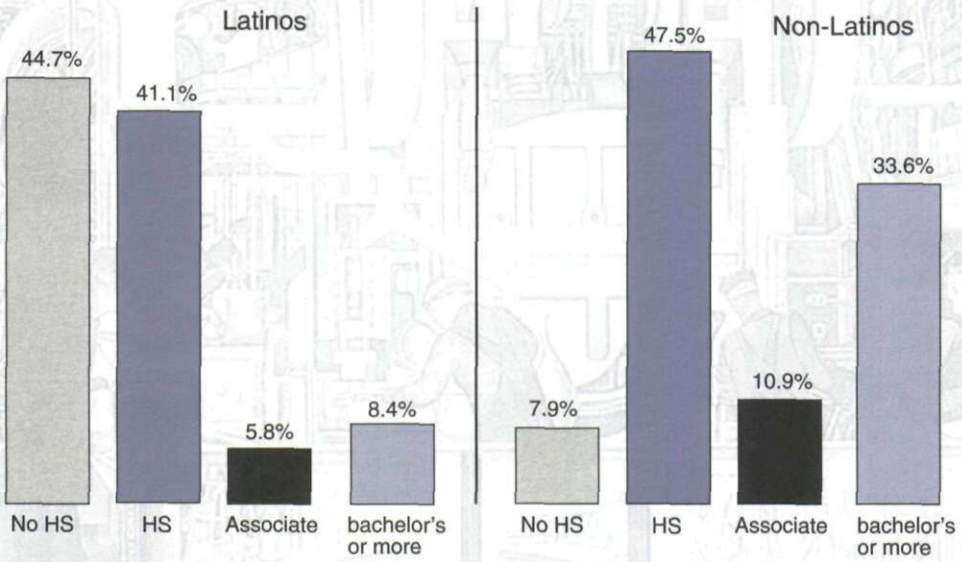


• The rising presence of Latinos in the California work force mirrors their increase in the population statewide. Latinos currently are the second-largest ethnic group in California, representing 30% of the state's population. But in 25 years, Latinos will surpass whites for the first time in modern history. A similar pattern is projected for the U.S. population as a whole, according to the U.S. Dept. of Commerce. By the year 2050, the Latino population is projected to reach 97 million nationally, an increase of 258%.

Education

Education Levels

The education level of Latinos in the labor force is comparatively low. About 45% of Latinos have no high school diploma, 41% have a high school education while only 8.4% have a bachelor's or higher degree.



• Wages of Latinos are low primarily because their educational attainment is low, according to a 1999 study by the California Research Bureau. The study concludes that education is a bigger factor in low wages than age, gender or ethnicity.

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A tale of two states

by Marc Sandalow

On a glorious summer day four and a half years ago, presidential candidate Pete Wilson stood before the Statue of Liberty and proudly touted his hard line on illegal immigration.

"There is a right way, and a wrong way to enter this country" the California governor declared as he officially began what would be a short-lived run for the presidency.

The same day in New Hampshire, the Wilson campaign began running television commercials to introduce New England voters to the governor's distinctive brand of California politics — a grainy video of Mexicans dashing across the California border accompanied by ominous music and a narrator who explained how Wilson was the "first leader in America to have the courage to stand up to illegal immigration."

Flash forward to this past December, as another Republican governor from a big border state campaigned for the presidency. George W. Bush addressed a nearly all-white crowd in this nearly all-white state. Yet, the governor of Texas was talking Spanish.

"Amigo!" he beckoned to a Latino-looking gentleman who opened the Q-and-A, before uttering a few phrases in Spanish. The questioner wanted to know how Bush intended to attract Hispanic votes. "In order for our party to be relevant, we had better understand how," Bush began, before explaining how his campaign would emphasize issues popular among Hispanics.

The tale of two governors vividly illustrates the growing importance of the Latino vote, something so obvious it has become cliche.

The statistics make an unmistakable case: By 2005 Latinos will be the largest minority in the U.S. By 2050 they will make up a quarter of the nation's population. There are already 16 million voting age Hispanics in the four largest states — California, New York, Texas and Florida — representing more than half the electoral votes needed to become president.

The results on the campaign trail are impossible to miss: Bush is running Spanish-language radio ads in Iowa. Vice President Al Gore tells audiences: *"Yo estoy aqui porque yo amo y respeto la comunidad Latina."*

Though some dismiss the stilted, bilingual efforts as little more than pandering, most Latino leaders have no complaint against politicians finally paying attention.

As the 20th century comes to a close, it is Texas that is viewed as the progressive leader on such issues while California lags behind. California may be home to medicinal marijuana and self-esteem panels, but it is the Lone Star State — home to concealed weapons and Tom DeLay — that has more easily come to terms with its Latino future.

In California, there are 762 elected or appointed Latino officials, representing 16 percent of the national total. In Texas, 1,724 Latinos serve in such offices, representing more than one in three of the national total. Five Mexican governors attended Bush's inaugural, where a huge banner reading "Juntos Podemos" (Together We Can) hung over the ceremony.

It is Texas that is viewed as the progressive leader on such issues while California lags behind.

"In Texas, they know Mexican-Americans are part of the state. They are your neighbors and co-workers and employees," said Lisa Navarrete of the National Council of La Raza. "Texans are much more cognizant of history. California has some catching up to do."

There are many reasons for the differences.

Texas shares a border with Mexico that spans more than 1,000 miles. It has long and deep roots to Mexico. Mexican-Americans in Texas tend to have been around many more generations. Its exports to Mexico are nearly four times larger than California's.

In national political circles, pundits offer a much simpler explanation – Pete Wilson. The former governor has become the whipping boy of strategists from both parties in explaining why Latinos typically vote Democratic by a 2-to-1 margin. Never mind Wilson's distinction between illegal and legal immigrants. Latino leaders said his tone fostered a prejudice that they will not easily forget.

Meanwhile Bush, who is as Latino-friendly as any Republican, receives more credit than he probably deserves. He is hardly a hero among Texas Latinos, who are overwhelmingly Democratic. Bush spent $4 million in the 1998 governor's race on the tiny, yet heavily Hispanic El Paso market. He won nearly two-thirds of all the votes cast — and yet more than half the Latino population voted against him.

Still, in four short years it has become abundantly clear that the road to national political office requires running with, and not against, the burgeoning Latino electorate.

Contributing Editor Marc Sandalow is Washington bureau chief for the San Francisco Chronicle. *The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the* California Journal.

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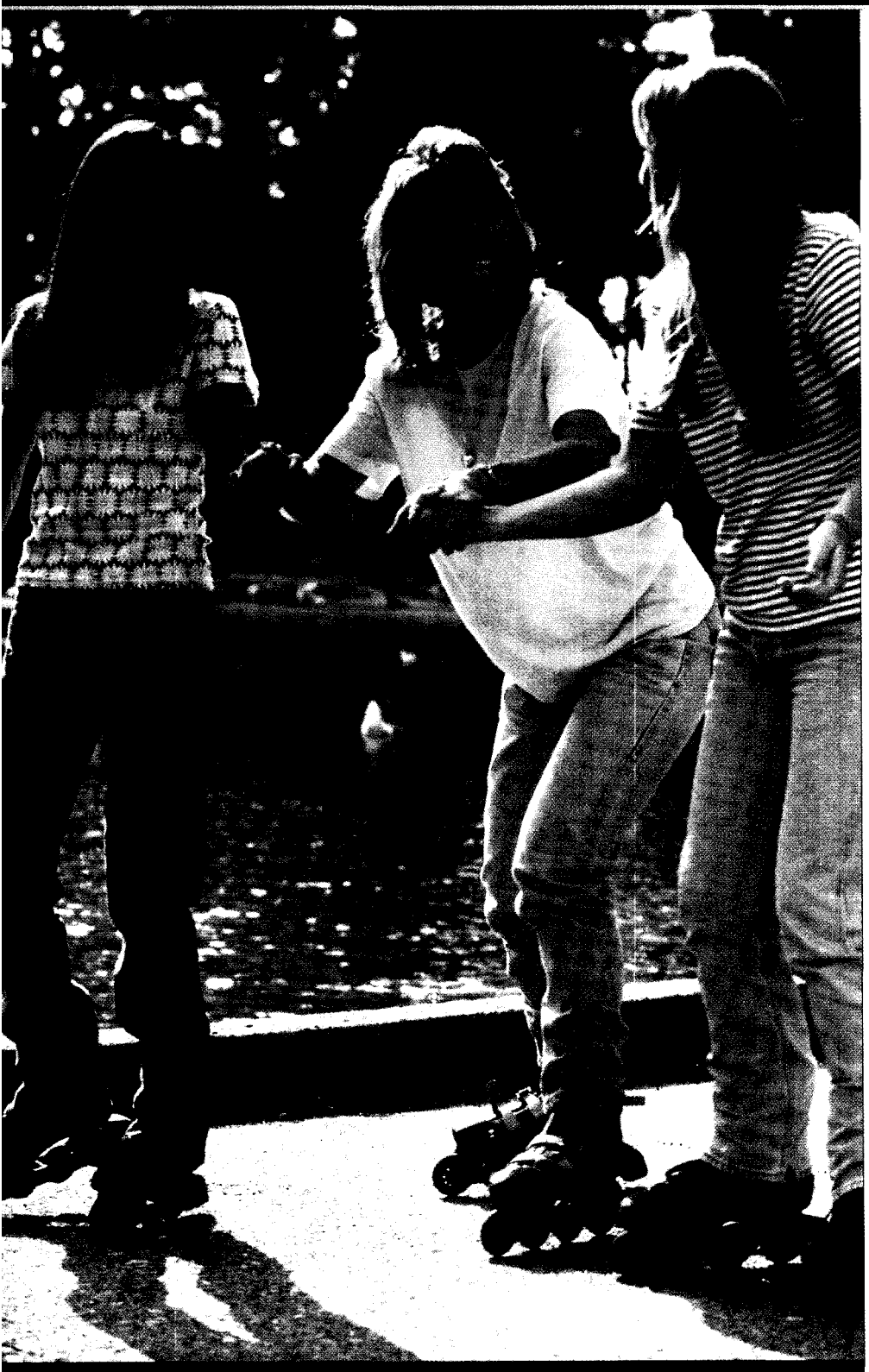
Kids, Teens and Calcium



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